METRO / A19

12 '3G' trains to boost LRT line 1 fleet

BUSINESS / B6

Cebu Asean summit drops plan to adopt single currency

WORLD / A24

Russia rejects extradition of suspects in murder by poison of ex-spy in UK

NEWS / A2

Davide grilled by Jinggoy, Tatad and judge dismissed for consulting dwarves

WORLD / A24

Nasa telescope sees black hole gulping remote star

Permanent evacuation of Mayon areas ordered

By Gil C. Cabacungan Jr. *in Manila*
and Job B. Belen *Inquirer Southern Luzon*

PRESIDENT MACAPAGAL-ARROYO HAS ORdered the "permanent evacuation" of people living at the foot of Mayon Volcano following the wide swath of death and destruction left by Supertyphoon "Reming."

Devastating torrents of mud and volcanic ash

PERMANENT/ A6

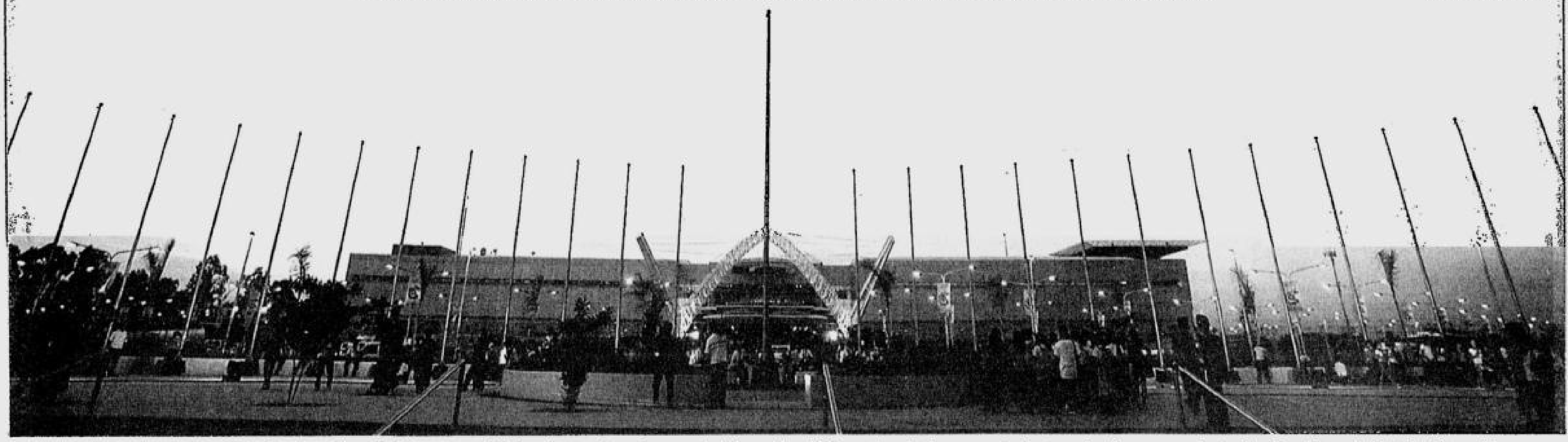
PHILIPPINE DAILY
INQUIRER
BALANCED NEWS, FEARLESS VIEWS
Thursday, December 7, 2006 ★★★ 6 sections / Vol. 21 / No. 362 P18 website: www.inq7.net

P500-M Cebu convention center finally opens

By Volt Contreras

CEBU CITY—A VENUE ORIGINALLY PLANNED to be a sports arena formally opened here yesterday as the hub of the 12th Association of Southeast Asian Nations (Asean) Summit, where leaders of the 10-nation bloc hope to make fresh steps toward erasing borders and finding a common, level playing field.

P500-M CEBU/ A17



EDWIN BALASMAS

CLOSE, OPEN convention center in Mandaue City officially opens on Wednesday—at least for press briefings. Most VIP meetings in the run-up to the two-day Asean summit starting Dec. 11 are held at the Shangri-La Mactan. A candlelight ceremony was to take place last night to highlight the inaugural rites of what had been originally built as a sports arena until the Asean chairmanship fell on the Philippines a year earlier than scheduled.

Church to fight Con-ass

El Shaddai, CBCP heads warn House

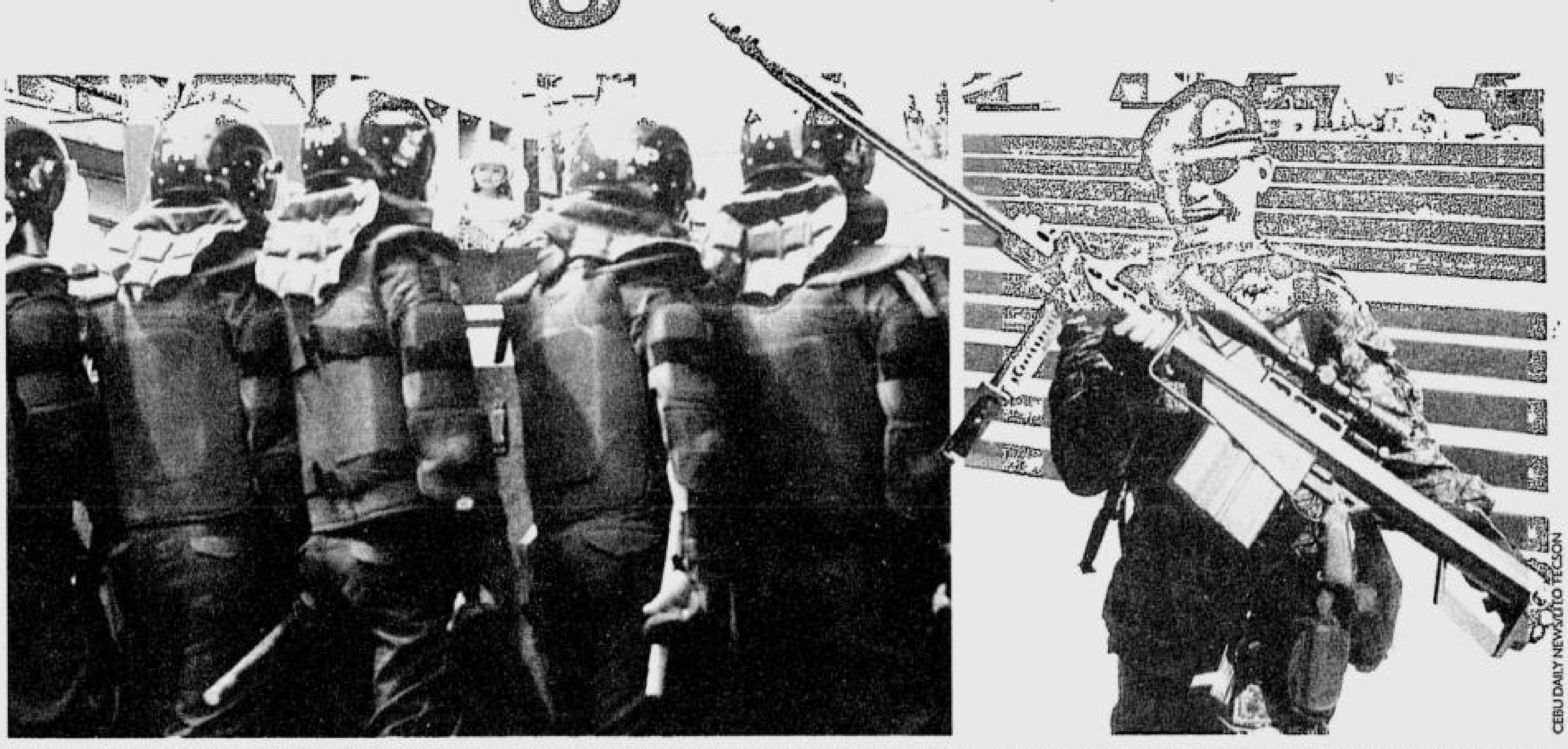
By Juliet Labog-Javellana
and Christian V. Esguerra

HEAVYWEIGHTS ARE GEARING to oppose the Palace-House move to amend the 1987 Charter through a House-only constituent assembly (Con-ass).

Archbishop Angel Lagdameo, president of the influential Catholic Bishops Conference of the Philippines, yesterday urged the faithful "to be vigilant, to express their opposition to Con-ass and to offer prayers for our government," and Bro. Mariano "Mike" Velarde, leader of the 4-million strong El Shaddai charismatic movement, called on all sectors to take part in a big protest rally planned for next week.

In a strongly worded statement titled "Watch and Pray for Self-Serving Representatives," Lag-

CHURCH/ A8



CEBU DAILY NEWS/JOTO TECSON

PREPARING FOR THE WORST: Police force blocks off a cause-oriented group rally on Osmena Boulevard on Wednesday, four days before the Asean summit even as a cute little girl all deck in her finery stares them down. A sniper (right) from the Special Action Force packs up a .50 cal. rifle after a dry run at the Cebu International Convention Center.

Villar: Senate ready to do battle on all fronts

By Michael Lim Ubac
and Juliet Labog-Javellana

SENATE PRESIDENT MANUEL VILLAR yesterday served notice that the chamber was prepared to fight the House-only constituent assembly (Con-ass) on all fronts even as the House of Representatives was set to force a vote last night on House resolution calling for the convening of Con-ass.

The opposition had effectively derailed the timetable for Charter change (Cha-cha).

The original game plan was to pass House Resolution 1450 the other night and set the date for the commencement of the Con-ass on Monday, so that senators would have a three-day notice before the joint assembly.

The minority, while greatly outnumbered by administration allies, had managed to delay the plan by raising a record number of points of order and parliamentary inquiries.

The extent of the delay depends on how long the minority would be able to hold its ground.

Villar convened a caucus of all senators at 5 p.m. to map out the action that the chamber would take to block the House-only Con-ass.

He said the House had to surmount three hurdles before it could have its way in scrapping the presidential sys-

VILLAR/ A8

Puno is Chief Justice; delay in appointment favors Con-ass

By Leila B. Salaverria

REYNATO PUNO, THE MOST SENIOR ASSOciate justice of the Supreme Court, was sworn in late last night as Chief Justice.

Executive Secretary Eduardo Ermita told the INQUIRER that President Macapagal-Arroyo administered the oath-taking toward midnight in the presence of members of Puno's family.

Puno replaces outgoing Chief Justice Artemio Panganiban who retired yesterday

PUNO/ A8

US CUSTODY

Palace: Gov't has no choice on Smith

By Gil C. Cabacungan Jr.,
Nikko Dizon and Tarra V. Quismundo

THE PHILIPPINE GOVERNMENT HAS no choice but to comply with the provisions of the Visiting Forces Agreement and hand over the American soldier convicted on Monday of raping a Filipino woman to the US Embassy in Manila, Malacañang said yesterday.

Rape victim "Nicole" claims she has been betrayed by her own country because it has agreed to Lance Cpl. Daniel Smith's plea to be returned to US custody.

In her second public appearance after the verdict was handed down on Monday, 23-year-old Nicole and her private lawyer Evalyn Ursua yesterday went to the Makati Regional Trial Court to oppose an urgent motion that Smith's lawyer filed on Tuesday to ask that the soldier be placed under US custody pending an appeal of his conviction.

At a briefing in Malacañang, Executive Secretary Eduardo Ermita said what was in the provision was exact. "The Americans are right because they are going by Article 5 Paragraph 6 of the VFA," he said.

The provision cited by the embassy in

PALACE / A17

HU-HU-HU! MAHIRAP MAGING SANTA!

Boho! Ho! Santas' laps are wet on by kids

NEW YORK—SAYING "BO, ho, ho" is practically a Christmas miracle, given the job woes that Santas face each day in shopping malls and stores, according to a survey released early this week.

BOHO! HO!/ A6

PANGANIBAN

Justices hail Panganiban as Renaissance jurist

By Armand N. Nocum

SUPREME COURT JUSTICES YESTERDAY hailed Chief Justice Artemio V. Panganiban as a Renaissance jurist who steered the tribunal through one of the most trying times in the nation's history.

Panganiban, who retired yesterday upon reaching 70 and after serving 11 years on the bench, led the high court in striking down as unconstitutional several of President Macapagal-Arroyo's controversial acts.

These included the Arroyo administration's calibrated preemptive response policy toward protesters, Executive Order No. 464 that barred Cabinet and military officials from appearing in congressional hearings without Ms Arroyo's permission, and Presidential Proclamation No. 1017 which placed the entire country under a state of national emergency.

In their "Plaque of Acclamation," the justices cited Panganiban's "indomitable leadership of the court . . . when it heard and promptly decided an unprecedented number of landmark cases."

Panganiban, whom Ms Arroyo appointed as Chief Justice on Dec. 21 last year, cast the swing vote last month when the tribunal voted 8-7 in junking a petition by Ms Arroyo's allies to amend the Constitution through a people's initiative. A majority of the justices described the petition as a "grand deception" and "gigantic fraud."

Panganiban "leaves behind a Supreme

JUSTICES/ A6

WEATHER FORECAST

FORECAST: The eastern section of Luzon will be cloudy with rains while Visayas and Mindanao will be cloudy with scattered rainshowers and thunderstorms. The rest of the country will be partly cloudy to cloudy with isolated rainshowers or thunderstorms.
SOURCE: PAGASA

COMPILED BY KATE PEDROSO, INQUIRER RESEARCH/12/06/06

Metro Manila	Cloudy with Rains	Iloilo/Bacolod	Cloudy with Rains
Baguio	Cloudy with Rains	Roxas	Cloudy with Rains
Tuguegarao	Cloudy with Rains	Cebu	Cloudy with Rains
Laoag	Cloudy with Rains	Tacloban	Cloudy with Rains
Clark Zone	Cloudy with Rains	Gen. Santos	Cloudy with Rains
Tagaytay	Cloudy with Rains	Zamboanga	Cloudy with Rains
Legazpi	Cloudy with Rains	Cagayan de Oro	Cloudy with Rains
Calapan	Cloudy with Rains	Davao	Cloudy with Rains

Second FRONTPAGE

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Erap allies jump on Davide

Former Chief Justice parries questions in Commission on Appointments grilling

By TJ Burgonio

SEEKING CONFIRMATION FOR the post of permanent Philippine representative to the United Nations, Former Chief Justice Hilario Davide Jr. yesterday faced stiff opposition in the Commission on Appointments from former allies of President Joseph Estrada as well as a judge who claims to be communicating with dwarfs.

Appearing before the Commission on Appointments, the former Chief Justice found himself arrayed against the likes of former Sen. Francisco "Kit" Tatad and deposed President Joseph Estrada's erstwhile lawyer Alan Paguia, who questioned his age qualification.

Davide was also grilled lengthily by Estrada's son, Sen. Jinggoy Estrada, for administering the oath of office to then Vice President Arroyo in January 2001 after Estrada was toppled by a military-backed people's revolt.

But what provided a light moment to the otherwise grim proceeding was the appearance of another oppositor: dismissed Malabon Judge Florentino Floro Jr., who made no bones about his closeness to three dwarfs.

In the end, the CA committee on foreign affairs, chaired by Sen. Miriam Defensor-Santiago, decided to resume the questioning at the next session for lack of time. Malacañang nominated Davide as permanent representative to the UN in late March.

Dismissed

Floro, who claimed he was still an incumbent judge of the Malabon Regional Trial Court even though he had been dismissed by the Supreme Court in March this year for psychological incapacity, blamed Davide for his suspension.

DAVIDE

Floro moved to defer Davide's nomination for involvement in graft, which he said he had learned through Davide's partner Filemon Fernandez, and from talking to dwarfs. He also claimed Davide was in poor health.

When asked if he had any personal knowledge of Davide's involvement in graft, he replied: "He also cut the Bible. The angels appeared to me, and this is my spiritual belief."

At the hearing, an amused Sen. Juan Ponce Enrile asked him if he believed, saw and talked to dwarfs, Floro replied in the affirmative.

"[I've seen] three. Luis, Armand and Angel," he said, drawing laughter from the legislative staff, guests and spectators. "They are world famous because they are in Google. In fact they exist. The decision points to them."

"They were called dwarfs by our culture but they are really angels of God. They are angels your honor," he added. "They have only one mission: to clean the judiciary. Those who are receiving bribes. That's only my mission: to clean the judiciary and to heal the sick."

Floro admitted believing in "psychic visions" to see the future because of his power in "psychic phenomenon" and confessed he had a covenant with his "dwarf friends," and that he could write while in a trance.

Davide denied the oppositor's claims he committed graft and had poor health. Floro, he added, had been dismissed from the judiciary.

Pink of health

"I can guarantee you, that at this time, I am in the pink of health. Probably even healthier than the oppositor," he said.

"Besides, the last pleading concentrates on the so-called three dwarves. I don't think the committee should entertain the appearance of dwarves and I cannot be compelled to answer the supposed performance of dwarves," he continued, eliciting chuckles from the spectators.

Earlier, Tatad argued that Davide's appointment was void "ab initio" because Sec. 23 of the Republic Act No. 7157 or the Foreign Service Act of 1991, barred the appointment of foreign affairs officers above 70 years old.

Davide, however, pointed out that the particular section referred only to chiefs of mission, career ministers, foreign service officers and honorary consuls, and did not apply to his case.

"Non-career officials may be appointed by the President as heads of the permanent and diplomatic missions provided that the President shall be guided as much as possible by the principle that a majority of diplomatic missions shall be headed by career ambassadors," he said.

Vacuum of power

This, he added, was the only limit to the President's power to appoint non-career individuals like himself as head of diplomatic and permanent missions, and that even the President, in his or her discretion, may not observe the limitation.

Replying to Estrada' questions, Davide justified his decision to administer the oath of office to then Vice President Arroyo on Jan. 20, 2001.

"I would be very frank about it... a military junta may take over if the President, for instance, had no more power, and was abandoned by everybody. So there was really a vacuum of power and leadership... I felt I could administer the oath," he said.

"Assuming that these circumstances would come to pass, then I was prepared to this whole idea of saving the country and our people," he added.

Melo probers find no military link to Bacolod killings

By Armand N. Nocum

AN OFFICIAL OF THE COMMISSION headed by former Supreme Court Justice Jose Melo which is looking into the rash of extrajudicial killings in the country yesterday said that the killing of civil rights activists in Bacolod City is connected to long standing land disputes there and is the handiwork of communist hit squads hired by landlords.

Revealing initial findings of their four month investigation, Chief State Prosecutor Jovencito Zuño, a member of the Melo Commission, also said there is no evidence of military participation in the 10 extrajudicial killings in Bacolod.

The Bacolod killings are part of the 160 assassination incidents being investigated by the body.

Zuño said Communist rebels and mercenaries had been hired by landlords to liquidate farmers.

"Most of these cases are killings related to agrarian issues because the victims are farmers who wanted full implementation of the Agrarian Reform Law," Zuño said.

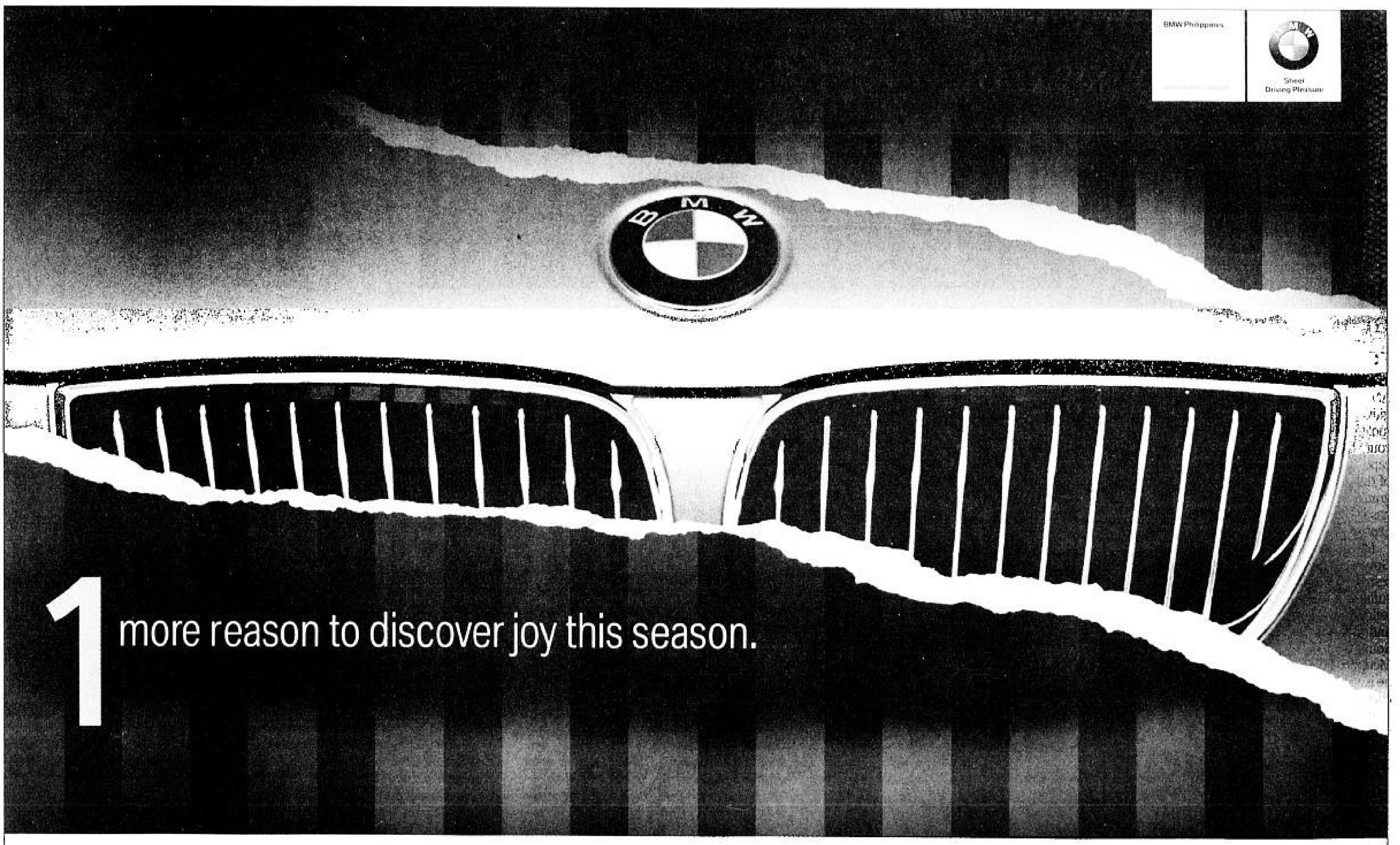
"They are victims of landlords who hired (members of the) New People's Army, the breakaway New Revolutionary Proletarian Army, or guns for hire. They are the suspects in these killings," he said, concluding that the murders are "not politically motivated."

The official did not reveal the details of their investigation and the proof of his conclusion clearing the military and implicating communist rebels.

Zuño also criticized militant groups like Karapatan, Bayan Muna, Anak Pawis, Gabriela for refusing to participate in the hearings.

"They do not want to participate because they don't want to give credence to the Melo Commission," he said.

The Melo panel earlier promised to bring to justice to those responsible for the recent spate of killings involving journalists and political activists.



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Final version of poll automation bill hammered out

By TJ Burgonio

FOLLOWING FIVE DAYS OF meetings, the House and the Senate yesterday hammered out a final version of a bill seeking to computerize Philippine elections by authorizing the Commission on Elections to use an automated election system (AES) partially in 2007 and fully in 2010.

Sen. Richard Gordon announced that the Senate panel that he heads and its House counterpart, led by Makati City Rep. Teodoro Locsin Jr., had resolved certain contentious provisions, paving the way for the bill's approval by both chambers.

The final version authorized the automation of elections in 2007 in two provinces and two highly urbanized cities each in Luzon, Visayas and Mindanao. These localities are to be chosen by the Comelec with the consent of the provincial boards and city councils.

Provinces and cities whose officials are charged administratively within 16 months before the May 14, 2007 elections will be excluded from the automation exercise.

P2.6B for automation

The two chambers agreed to appropriate P2.6 billion for the automation of the 2007 elections.

The legislation sought to amend and expand the scope of the current election automation law, Republic Act 8436, by authorizing the use of an AES in the voting, counting, consolidation, canvassing and transmission of election and other processes.

Demonstrated capability

According to the bill's final version, different automated systems can be used in different provinces so long as the they have "demonstrated capability."

"For 2010, it must have been successfully used in a prior electoral exercise here or abroad. Participation in the 2007 pilot exercises shall not be conclusive of the system's fitness," said Gordon, who chairs the Senate committee on constitutional amendments.

The technology to be used would be neutral and would not preclude "current or future technology."

"We can use whatever is out there and whatever is appropriate, secure, applicable and cost-effective," he said.

'Dagdag-bawas'

To avoid *dagdag-bawas* (vote-shaving and padding), results from each precinct are to be simultaneously transmitted electronically to the different boards of canvassers, accredited citizens' arm, the dominant majority and minority parties and the media—within one hour after the election returns are printed.

One photocopy of the ER will be posted on the wall of the canvassing center for everyone to see. A voter-verified paper audit trail will be used in recounts and random audits.

The ERs and certificates of canvass transmitted electronically and digitally signed are to be considered official election results and used as the basis for the proclamation of a candidate.

If a discrepancy should occur between the automated and manual count, a manual count of the votes in the affected precincts would be conducted.

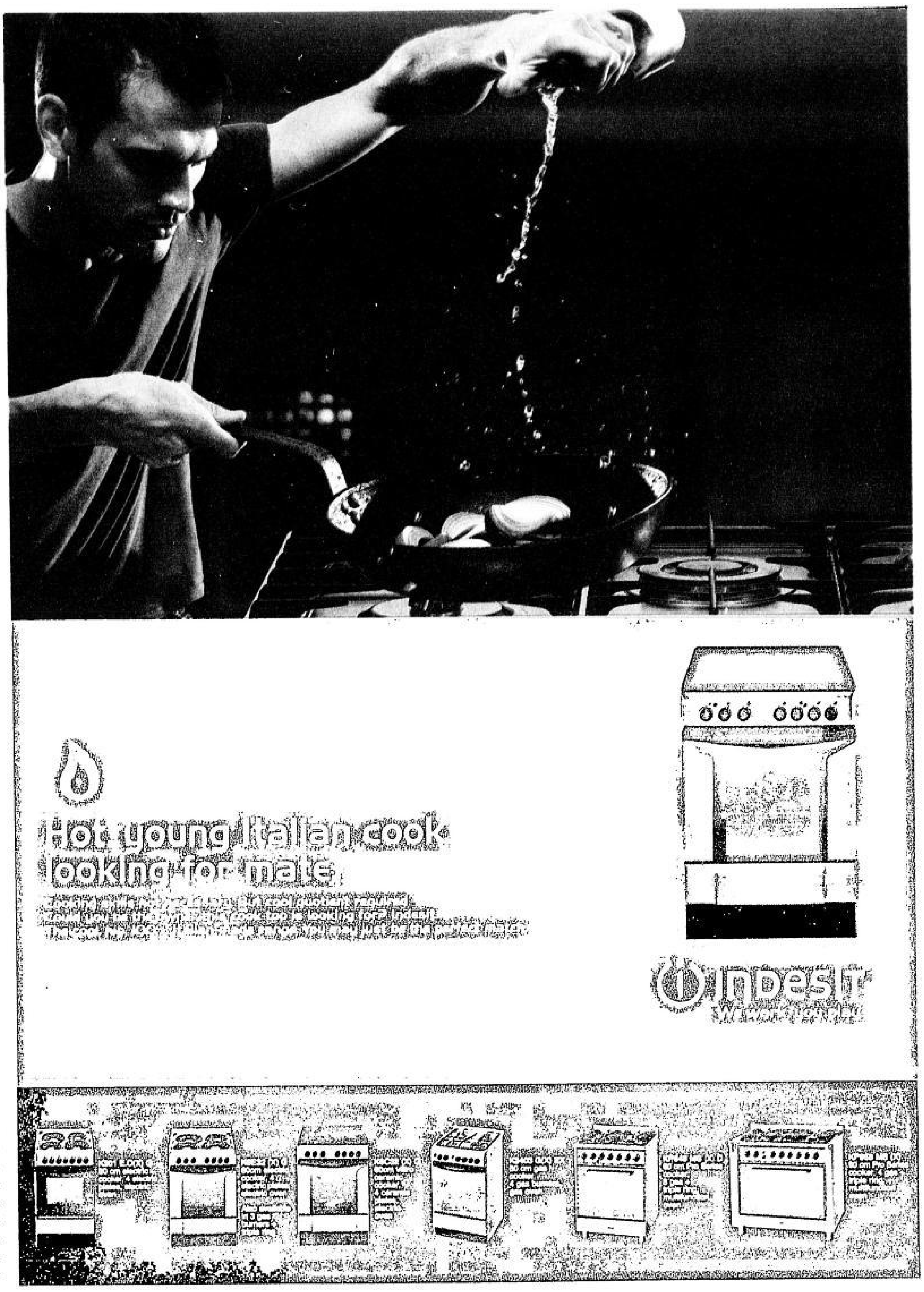
An advisory council is to be formed to review and recommend the most appropriate and cost-effective technology for the AES.

Transparency

To ensure transparency, its officials will take part in the bidding for the AES to be conducted by the Comelec.

The council is to be chaired by an official of the Commission on Information and Communications Technology, and be composed of representatives from the science and education departments, the academe, information communications technology sector, and nongovernment organizations.

A technical evaluation committee will be created to certify that the AES to be used had operated properly in a field-testing process in a mock election.



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American molester recaptured

AN AMERICAN FUGITIVE convicted of child molestation in his home country but who escaped from the clutches of the Bureau of Immigration five years ago has been recaptured in Olongapo City.

Melvin Edward McGowan, 63, was arrested on Nov. 28, but suffered a heart attack following his arrest and was taken to the South Superhighway Medical Center where he is now confined, according to the BI.

Immigration commissioner Alipio Fernandez Jr. said McGowan has been placed under guard to prevent a repeat of his earlier escape and will be deported at the proper time.

McGowan was first arrested in Iloilo in March 2001. The police later turned him over to the BI. However, the American escaped from the bureau's custody after being issued a medical pass.

McGowan is wanted in the United States for violating the conditions of his parole, BI intelligence chief Faizal Hussin said in a statement. The American was convicted in California in 1995 of two counts of lewd and lascivious acts with a child under 14 years old.

Leila B. Salaverria

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Everest climbers head biggest batch of TOYM awardees

THE OUTSTANDING Young Men awardees pose with President Macapagal-Arroyo in Malacañang. REM ZAMORA

TWO MEN WHO BECAME THE first Filipinos to scale Mt. Everest, a former GMA 7 reporter who now anchors Asian business news at the British Broadcasting Corp., a best-selling writer of Christian inspirational books, a female pediatrician who provides care for abused children and a 29-year-old businessman who pioneered the call center business in the country, were among the 12 awardees of The Outstanding Young Men (TOYM) of 2006.

The recipients, who make up the biggest batch of awardees since the TOYM was set up in 1959, each received a medal and a trophy from President Macapagal-Arroyo yesterday during ceremonies in Malacañang yesterday.

This year's awardees are:

- Heradio Oracion and Romeo Garduce for Sports. The two became the first Filipinos to scale Mt. Everest, the world's highest peak, early this year;
- Eugenio Isabelo Tomas Sanchez or Bo Sanchez for Community Development and Public Service in Journalism. He is behind the widely circulated Kerygma, and the author of best-selling Christian inspirational books;
- Lawyer Romero Quimbo for Government Service. The president/chief executive officer of the Pag-Ibig Fund, he was cited for spearheading the rationalization and liberalization of the government's housing programs;
- Dr. Mariella Sugue-Castillo for Medicine-Child Protection. She pioneered the multidisciplinary approach to the care of abused children by co-founding the First Child Protection Unit under the Department of Pediatrics of the Philippine General Hospital;
- Dr. Rafael Consunji for Medical Community Service. He pioneered the Safe Kids Program aimed at keeping children safe from accidental injuries;
- Dr. Windell Rivera for Medical Science (Microbiology). He developed a diagnostic tool to accurately detect the causes of gastrointestinal disorders from parasites;
- Dr. Samuel Soliven for Education, for his contribution as a Math and Science teacher at the St. Mary's University in Nueva Vizcaya;
- Vivienne Tan for Business Education-Entrepreneurship. She founded the Thames International, now known as Entrepreneurs School of Asia, that promotes entrepreneurship education and training;
- Federico Hizon for International Journalism, the first Filipino male news anchor to work for CNBC and BBC;
- Michael Allen Cancio for Arts and Sculpture, for his exceptional brass sculptures that depict the Filipino family and its values and traditions; and
- Louis Benedict Hernandez for Business Leadership, for leading a startup and industry-pioneering company, eTelecare Global Solutions. *Christine O. Avendaño*

Temporary water interruption in Taguig, San Juan and Mandaluyong needed to upgrade facilities

Manila Water is currently upgrading its distribution lines and facilities to improve the distribution of water in the East Zone. We regret that we will need to have several temporary water supply interruptions to facilitate the faster completion of the improvement projects. The first cutoff will occur beginning 12:01 a.m. up to 3:01 a.m., Friday, December 8, 2006. Areas affected will be Signal Village, Upper Bicutan, FTI and Bagong Tanyag, all in Taguig. Meanwhile, another water supply interruption will also occur which will start 8:00 p.m., Thursday, December 7, 2006, up to 6:00 a.m., Friday, December 8. Affected areas will be: Barangays Corazon De Jesus, Pasadena, P. Cruz, Batis, Tibagan, Sta. Lucia in San Juan and Barangays Addition Hills, Kabayanan and Maytunas in Mandaluyong City

Manila Water Company advises all residents of the said areas to store enough water prior to the scheduled interruptions to avoid inconvenience.

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(PDI – Dec. 7, 2006)

Gov't to cut natural gas royalty

By Abigail L. Ho

THE GOVERNMENT IS LOOKING to reduce the royalty fees it imposes on natural gas in order to bring down consumer power rates.

Energy Secretary Raphael Lotilla said the country currently imposes higher natural gas royalty fees compared to its neighbors in the Association of Southeast Asian Nations.

"We will continue to look at those numbers and we will have to coordinate with the Department of Finance regarding the possible reduction of the royalties," he said.

"We want to make sure that there is a direct reduction for the consumers and that it will be a significant one," he said.

The government earns substantial revenues from the taxes and royalty fees it collects from contractors developing such resources as the natural gas fields of Malampaya off Palawan.

Lotilla said that among the items that the government would need to review are the prices agreed upon in the supply agreements that independent power producers like First Gas and the state-owned National Power Corp. have with members of the consortium that operates the Malampaya natural gas project.

The prices at which these power companies buy their natural gas is crucial because these are eventually passed on to electricity consumers.

Lotilla said there was a huge difference between the price at which First Gas buys its natural gas from the consortium and the price that Napocor agreed on.

However, he said the royalty fees imposed on natural gas cannot be scrapped that easily as the government uses the proceeds to support Napocor.

Oscar Lopez, the head of the Lopez Group that owns First Gas, earlier said the current tax and royalties structure was skewed in favor of imported fuels and discriminated against indigenous fuels like natural gas.

"Indigenous fuels are made artificially more expensive than imported ones because of this tax and royalty burden," he said.

Based on government data, royalty fees on indigenous natural gas amounts to P1.79 per kilowatt-hour (kWh), compared with that imposed on indigenous coal, which only comes up to 41 centavos per kWh.

Every kWh of power produced using natural gas is also slapped with a 12-percent value-added tax of 56 centavos, as compared with only 54 centavos for imported liquefied natural gas and 48 centavos for imported coal.

**STOP THE KILLINGS OF INDIGENOUS PEOPLES,
VOTE FOR THE ADOPTION OF THE UNITED NATIONS DECLARATION ON THE RIGHTS OF INDIGENOUS PEOPLES**

eedtfip

STATEMENT OF THE
Evangelischer Entwicklungsdienst – EED
(Church Development Service)
Philippine Partners' Task Force on Indigenous Peoples' Rights

WE COMMEND the adoption of the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples on 29 June 2006 by the UN Human Rights Council (HRC), which then recommended it to the UN General Assembly (GA). The Declaration is a product of the continuing struggles of indigenous peoples and their advocates for the recognition, promotion, and protection of indigenous peoples' individual and collective rights and freedoms. Indeed, it is a significant achievement of and for indigenous peoples around the globe.

WE REGRET that while majority of all member-states of the UN HRC from Asia voted for the Declaration, the Philippine government abstained despite its purported commitment to uphold indigenous peoples' rights through the Indigenous Peoples' Rights Act.

WE ARE SHOCKED AND OUTRAGED that the 3rd Committee (Social, Humanitarian and Cultural Committee) of the 61st UN GA passed the Namibian resolution which called for a postponement of the adoption of the Declaration last 28 Nov. 2006. We believe that this came about because of the fear-mongering tactics, alarmist moves, and mounting pressure exerted by the governments of the US, Australia, New Zealand and Canada on African governments

WE NOTE that the Philippine government, along with several Asian governments, abstained in voting for the Namibian Amendment which called for the deferral of the adoption of the Declaration.

WE ARE GRATEFUL that the European Union voted as a bloc for the adoption of the Declaration at the UN HRC and subsequently voted against the said Namibian Amendment.

WE DENOUNCE AND CONDEMN the culture of impunity and the spate of killings in the country under the Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo government. Included among the victims are indigenous persons struggling to defend their lands from large-scale mining, mega-dams, logging, and other policies and programs that promote development aggression.

As of November 2006, the Indigenous Peoples' Human Rights Watch-Philippines has documented 97 cases of killings of indigenous peoples under the administration of Pres. Macapagal-Arroyo: 43 Lumads of Mindanao, 14 Dumagats/ Remontados and Mangyans of Southern Tagalog, 34 Igorots of the Cordillera, and 6 Aetas of Central Luzon. These killings are grave violations of indigenous people's human rights.

On the occasion of the International Human Rights Day and the Second Decade of the World's Indigenous Peoples, we join the growing clamor for governments to uphold the human rights, equality, and dignity if Indigenous peoples.

We call upon the Macapagal-Arroyo government to immediately stop extra-judicial killings and forced disappearances in the country, and bring justice to the victims.

We call for an independent, credible, and effective investigation of these political killings and forced disappearances.

We call on the government to uphold indigenous peoples' rights to their lands, territories and resources, to life and dignity, and to self-determination.

We strongly urge the Philippine government to vote for the adoption of the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, as adopted by the UN HRC, before the current session of the UN GA ends in September 2007. We also call upon all other governments to do the same as the landmark Declaration sets the minimum standards which will ensure the survival, dignity and basic rights of indigenous peoples worldwide.

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BACOLOR TRAGEDY

Albay disaster brings back memories of lahar

By Tonette Orejas
Inquirer Central Luzon

BACOLOR, PAMPANGA—MUDFLOW FROM Mt. Mayon that buried Barangay Maipon in Guinobatan, Albay, and killed more than 100 people there on Nov. 30 is a worse tragedy than what happened to Barangay Cabalantian here 16 years ago, said survivors, who offered condolences and raised funds to help victims of the Bicol disaster.

The Bicol tragedy brought on by typhoon "Reming" brought back memories of the lahar flow from Mt. Pinatubo, similarly unleashed by a typhoon, that rampaged through villages of Bacolor, burying their homes.

As more images and stories on the aftermath of Supertyphoon "Reming" are told, Dr. Ma. Salve Olalia said the situation she has come to understand is that the Maipon disaster is "worse than the Cabalantian tragedy in terms of death."

Having gone through the same horror, Olalia said: "I am overwhelmed by so much sadness and grief."

Terrifying scenes

For Victoria Ocampo, 73, the scenes of despair, death and destruction in Maipon revived the vividness of the dangers and sufferings she and her family hurdled during the Mt. Pinatubo disaster.

"*Nakakapangilabot* (It's terrifying)," Ocampo said as she tended her vegetable plots amid a still wide expanse of lahar.

In the Cabalantian event, which happened in the early morning of Oct. 1, 1995 as Typhoon "Mameng" lashed through Central Luzon, lahar flow as tall as 20 to 30 feet came gushing down from the slopes of the volcano, spilling from the Pasig-Potrero River and bursting through the Gugu dike. Lahar ate up everything on its way, they recalled. The Department of Social Welfare and Development later reported the death toll at less than 100.

"It was more terrible in Maipon. I learned they had very little time to evacuate. We in Cabalantian managed to flee or climb on roofs," Olalia said.

Tamales-makers, mostly old women who cook the native delicacy during wee hours of mornings, alerted the villagers about the onslaught of what from a distance sounded like a stampede of horses.

Common fate

Pampanga Board Member Nilo Caballa said he was certain Maipon and Cabalantian would share one fate: "The rehabilitation will take a long time. Cabalantian and Bacolor have not fully recovered yet," Caballa said.

That was because the means for productive activities, like farms and tools, remained absent, according to Mayor Romeo Dungca.

Cabalantian managed to spring back to life only because the residents refused the plan of the Department of Public Works and Highways to extend the 56-km long FVR Megadike to the village.

The dike, built in 1996, enclosed 17 Bacolor villages to contain the lahar there and prevent it from spilling to the Pampanga capital of San Fernando.

Government had reported spending P31.8 billion on engineering measures, resettlement, social services and livelihood programs.

Reaching out

Pinatubo survivors are reaching out to Mayon victims. Olalia said the help that Cabalantian residents are pooling for the rehabilitation of Maipon would be coursed through the Aquinas University in Legazpi City.

"Sagip Bicol," initiated by Secretary Edgardo Pamintuan of the Luzon Urban Beltway super region, raised P300,000 in cash and assorted goods through a telethon over the Angeles City Cable Television Network on Tuesday night.

The Archdiocese of San Fernando has raised P254,690. The amount was used to buy rice and goods for delivery to the Catholic dioceses in Bicol, according to Fr. Deo Galang, executive director of the archdiocese Social Action Center of Pampanga.

Board Member Lilia Pineda and her son, Lubao Mayor Dennis Pineda, have started relief operations in Albay since Monday. The mayor said they have distributed 10,000 packs of rice, canned goods, clothes and bottled water.

TURNOVER HITCH

No new Navy chief yet

THE TURNOVER RITES FOR THE OUTGOING Philippine Navy chief have been laid out but with just one hitch—there has been no word about Malacañang appointing as successor.

With only a day to go before Navy Flag Officer in Command Vice Admiral Mateo Mayuga retires, President Macapagal-Arroyo has yet to make an announcement.

Mayuga, a member of the Philippine Military Academy Class 1973, will retire on Dec. 9 when he turns 56.

But he will relinquish command on Dec. 8. during formal turnover ceremonies at the Philippine Navy Headquarters in Manila.

No word from Palace

Navy spokesperson, Cmdr. Giovanni Bacordo said the appointment order is usually issued a few days before the turnover rites but there has been no word from the Palace.

"We are just as excited as you are," he said.

The AFP Board of Generals submitted a shortlist of nominees to the President last month.

Sources said those included in the list were Armed Forces Inspector General Rear Admiral Rogelio Calunsag; Rear Admiral Petronilo Magno, AFP deputy chief of staff for communications, electronics and information systems; and Rear Admiral Emilio Marayag, the Navy chief of staff.

The race has apparently come down to a choice between Calunsag and Marayag, the sources said.

Calunsag belongs to the PMA Class 1974, whose members include AFP Chief Gen. Hermogenes Esperon Jr. and Army Chief Lt. Gen. Romeo Tolentino.

Marayag, who is from PMA Class 1976, is regarded as Mayuga's protege and chief strategist.

But there are rumors that Vice Admiral Tirso Danga, the chief of the AFP's Western Command, is eyeing an appointment as "acting" Navy chief.

Danga headed the Intelligence Service of the Armed Forces (Isafp) when phone conversations between the President and former elections commissioner Virgilio Garcillano were illegally recorded and released to the public in the so-called "Hello Garci" tapes.

Not qualified

Danga, however, is no longer qualified to be appointed Navy chief as he has less than a year left in the service before he retires.

Former defense secretary Avelino Cruz Jr. gave high praise to Mayuga for carrying out the long-overdue eviction of "overstaying" Navy and Marine officers from military quarters at the Bonifacio Naval Station in Fort Bonifacio.

"I have met a most courageous, most efficient and morally upright officer" in Mayuga, Cruz declared in his farewell speech last Nov. 28.

Mayuga, who was not around when Cruz made the remarks, has told reporters that the evicted officers, many of whom were his upperclassmen at the PMA, continue to snub him during gatherings.

But he said he had no regrets about carrying out the evictions as 208 serving officers and enlisted personnel can now avail of military housing.

"It was worth it," Mayuga said.

Before his appointment as Navy chief in December 2005, Mayuga was the AFP Inspector General who headed the panel that cleared four generals, including Esperon, who were mentioned in the "Hello Garci" tapes.

The Mayuga-led panel virtually cleared the entire military of any electoral wrongdoing, but recommended that two officers be investigated for possible misconduct.

Mayuga will be given a testimonial parade and review at sea today at the Fort San Felipe naval base in Cavite City.

The naval review will be composed of at least 10 ships and gunboats.

PAL offers free cargo space for Bicol relief goods

PHILIPPINE AIRLINES ANNOUNCED YESTERday it was providing free cargo space for up to 200 kilos of relief goods—with priority on medicines—per PAL flight to Legazpi and Naga for the victims of Supertyphoon "Reming."

PAL president and chief operating officer Jaime J. Bautista directed the priority shipment of medicines on the PAL B737-300 aircraft that fly once daily to Legazpi and five times a week to Naga. The airline, in a press statement, said Bautista has tapped the PAL Foundation to coordinate the airline's relief efforts and airlift of donations to Bicol.

The PAL Foundation is also accepting donations, in cash or kind, which may be sent to their office, through Ms Menchu Sarmiento, executive director of the PAL Foundation, located at Gate 1 of the PAL Maintenance Base Complex (MBC), Nichols, Pasay City, with tel. nos. 852-6096, 851-2980; or through the PAL Executive Offices at the ground floor of the PAL Center Building, Legaspi Street, Legaspi Village in Makati City.

The PAL Foundation is likewise coordinating with the Association of Foundations (AF)—the largest and oldest network of charity organizations in the country of which the PAL Foundation is a member of its board—for other donations and relief efforts by AF members for eventual transport by PAL to Bicol.

Aside from an internal relief campaign among PAL employees for donations, PAL is also gathering surplus materials such as blankets and in-flight food. A parallel fund-raising drive is also being conducted among domestic and international passengers, PAL said. As many as 20 members of the PAL Mountaineering Club based in Legazpi and Naga have been mobilized to assist in the search and rescue operations. Other PAL mountaineers based in Manila are on standby for subsequent deployment when needed.

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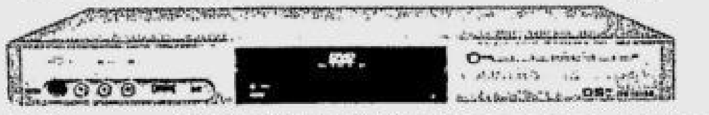

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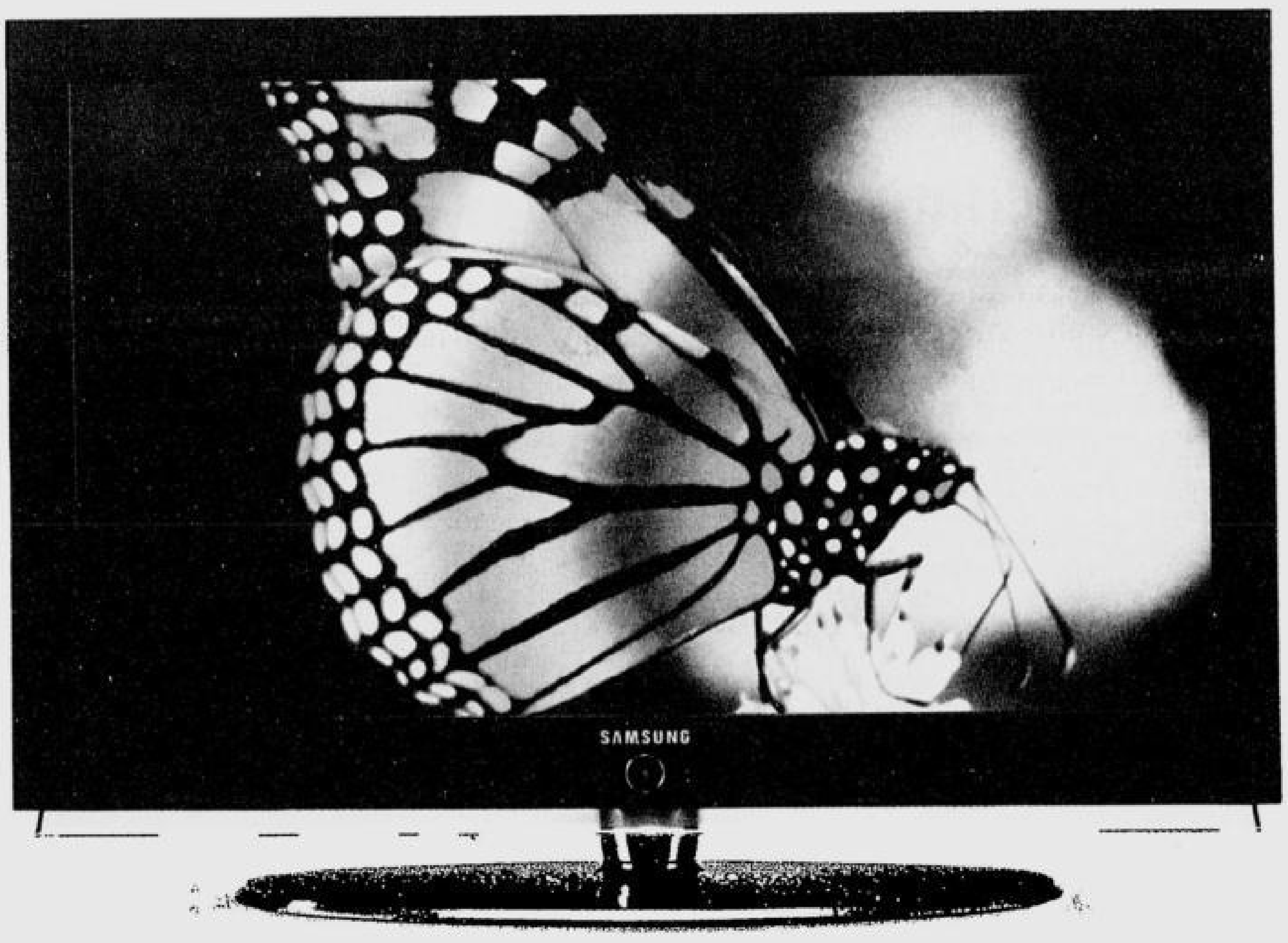

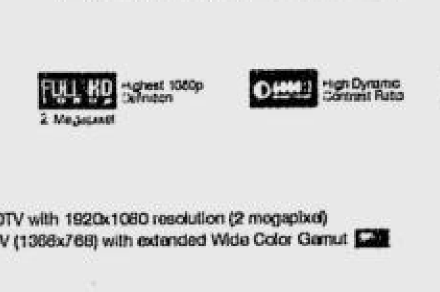

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‘We ran toward the mountain to save our lives’

By Gerald Gene R. Querubin
Inquirer Southern Luzon

BOAC, MARINDUQUE—“IN THE darkness, we ran as fast as we could toward the mountain to save our lives. We can see waves as tall as coconut trees coming at us,” Remelyn Logdat related between sobs her experience of the onslaught of Supertyphoon “Reming” on the night of Nov. 30.

For Logdat, a 20-year-old resident of the fishing village of Sitio Pakat-Pakat, her experience that stormy night was the worst thing that happened to her and her family.

Sitio Pakat-Pakat is a fishing village of Barangay Hinanggayon in the town of Mogpog.

“As early as 3 p.m., our house was heavily pounded by strong winds coming from the sea. When night came, the battering became worse,” Logdat said.

Waves as high as trees

“One by one the roofs of the houses in our community were torn apart. We have to bear with the strong winds and rains that pounded our homes. It was a nightmare,” she said.

“As my family prepared to evacuate to a higher and sturdier structure, we noticed that the waves crashing by the seashore were getting higher and bigger. We were warned by the elders that we had to move fast and evacuate to a higher location as they sensed that a tsunami was about to strike,” she continued.

Crutching her 2-year-old sister, she ran toward the mountains as fast as she could together with the rest of her family and neighbors.

“It was so cold and was so dark. I froze when I was almost hit by a falling clump of coconuts. But through the encouragement of my father who came back for us, we strove hard to reach a higher location,” Logdat said.

From where they evacuated, Logdat and the rest of her neighbors watched in horror their houses being crushed by waves as tall as coconut trees. Eventually, they had to settle for the night wet, cold and weeping.

When the skies cleared the following morning, Logdat and her neighbors trooped back to their community. They were shocked to see that most of the 26 houses were swept into the sea. Only houses made of concrete were left standing but without roofs. Their doors and windows were broken. Nothing was left for them.

Everything inside the houses was washed away as well.

They have nothing to cook for food, no clothes to wear and no roof to protect them from the heat of the sun. They scrounge the area for clothes that can still be used and have them dried. The community of almost 200 residents has to share 2 kilos of porridge among themselves for breakfast.

No livelihood

For Ryan Lamar, a student whose family resides in the same village, the typhoon had ruined their livelihood. Aside from their damaged house, Reming left their fishing boat a wreck.

“All of us here in Pakat-Pakat do not know what to do now. We have no other means of livelihood because all of the fishing boats were destroyed by the strong waves and winds brought about by the typhoon. We are hoping that the government can help us rebuild our homes and our lives,” Lamar said.

Sitio Pakat-Pakat remained isolated as roads going to this place were still impassable.

Gov. Carmencita Reyes, chair of the provincial disaster council, has instructed officials and personnel of the provincial engineering office to speed up the clearing of roads going to the isolated barangays so relief goods can be distributed.

Fallen trees and electric posts hamper relief operations in the province.

Losses drown Legazpi businesses

By Gina Rodriguez and Ephraim Aguilar
Inquirer Southern Luzon

PASSENGER FERRY ran aground on the shores of Tabaco City in Albay, the province hit hardest by “Reming,” reportedly the strongest typhoon to hit the country in living memory. AFP

LEGAZPI CITY—MOUNDS OF garbage, most of them cardboard boxes still soaked with water, were piled in front of the row of establishments downtown, majority of them still closed several days after Supertyphoon “Reming” hit this city.

Grim-faced shopowners keep a tight watch over the sparse goods being cleaned and dried, leftovers actually from the three- to five-foot flash floods that swept the city Thursday afternoon.

The wet merchandise damaged by Reming spelled losses of about P3 million for Cellstreet Telecom owner Henson Aquende, who used to upgrade his stock of Nokia cell phones and accessories weekly.

Prior to Reming, Henson, 28, anticipated brisk sales because Christmas was just around the corner. He had adequately stocked up on the newest model, but his concern right now is how he could pick up the pieces.

For five years, he has been in the business of selling handsets, accessories and e-load, which on peak days generate sales of at least P10,000 a day.

A sole proprietor whose sibling manages a jewelry store a few steps away, he said businessmen like him had no insurance for events like floods.

A computer shopowner, who refused to be identified, also has no insurance. She and her spouse wondered how they would manage to pay back their creditors who had agreed to consign goods to them.

Last June, the couple expanded the business, a one-door affair for the past 11 years, to a more spacious facility. It specializes in the latest computer paraphernalia this side of downtown.

The wife said the store had stocked up on goods worth at least P4 million for the Christmas season but the flood that damaged their stocks in the one-story showroom gave them very little to cheer about.

“Milenyo only damaged about 5 percent of my goods as waters reached only the flooring,” she says.

Like most shopowners downtown, Julius Rosauro, 34, of P. Aldana Cellphone, who lives on the second floor of his store, has been extra wary at night.

Since Day 1 of the flood that forced the closure of businesses, he has to contend with thieves who pry open aluminum shutters with crowbars.

“They think that since the stores are closed, the businesses have been abandoned,” he said.

The store cannot fully operate because the generator set was submerged in water and there is limit to the diesel (up to P500) that can be bought to run the set.

There has been no shortage of fuel but at least two gasoline stations were damaged by Reming, prompting motorists to form a queue when buying fuel.

Permanent evacuation of Mayon areas ordered

From page A1

loosened by heavy rains swallowed more than 700 villages on Nov. 30 during the height of Reming, the strongest typhoon to hit the Philippines in living memory.

Authorities have confirmed 526 dead, mostly around Mayon in Albay province, and another 740 missing.

Classes in public schools in Albay have been suspended indefinitely due to the widespread damage to school equipment, materials and buildings.

Relocation in 3 phases

Albay Rep. Joey Salceda, an economic adviser to Ms Arroyo, said the relocation would be done in three phases and would affect 69,000 families.

Salceda said P70,000 would be budgeted for each family—P50,000 for the typhoon-resistant house and P20,000 for the lot.

The relocation would cost the government P5 billion, according to the legislator.

Salceda said members of the House of Representatives and senators on the bicameral conference committee have agreed to take up the funding for the Mayon evacuation when they finalize the budget for 2007.

Salceda, chair of the House appropriations committee, said he had already met with Sen. Franklin Drilon who shared his concern for the need to pour funds into the area to avoid more fatalities.

Pledges of help

A week after the typhoon, pledges of help continued to pour in. France said yesterday it would release 100,000 euros ($135,000) in aid for the Philippines.

“Following an international appeal from the Red Cross in the Philippines, Foreign Minister Philippe Douste-Blazy has decided to allocate 100,000 euros in aid to families who lost everything in the disaster,” a spokesperson said.

British Ambassador Peter Beckingham yesterday conveyed to Ms Arroyo yesterday the condolences of Queen Elizabeth to the victims of Reming.

Queen Elizabeth said: “I was saddened to hear of the tragic loss of life during [the] typhoon. My thoughts and prayers are with you at this difficult time.”

British Foreign Office Minister Ian McCartney said the British Government was ready to help the people and the government of the Philippines. “Similar disasters seem to occur with unnecessary frequency in the Philippines, and all have tragic consequences. We are ready to provide support to the Philippine government to try to bring in long-term preventive measures,” he said.

In Manila, councilors passed a resolution allocating P5 million to P10 million for the typhoon victims.

Best option

Malacañang did not identify the barangays to be affected by the relocation. Mayon’s hazard zone covers the towns of Gatbonton, Camalig, Daraga, Malilipot, Sto. Domingo and Ligao City.

Rising to 2,462 meters (8,125 feet) and beautifully symmetrical, the active Mayon has for years been a tourist attraction, and shops and villages have sprung up on its slopes despite the danger.

“It appears that the best option is the permanent evacuation of all the families living within the hazard zones of Mayon Volcano,” Press Secretary Ignacio Bunye said in a statement.

When Mayon spewed ash and showed signs of minor eruptions, officials warned residents to evacuate several times this year

A 4-kilometer-radius “permanent danger zone” is in place, and villagers apparently thought that they would be safe beyond that.

“Some of the villages that were buried were not on the slopes. So this was a phenomenon that in a way was not anticipated,” Albay Gov. Fernando Gonzales said.

Gonzales said those affected would not be allowed to rebuild and should be relocated. “It’s a great concern, living where they are,” he said.

Topography study

A fresh study of Mayon’s topography is also to be carried out in the wake of the tragedy, the governor said.

Bunye said the decision to relocate residents was in keeping with the President’s policy of not leaving the fate of the people to chance.

“This tragedy is another painful lesson that calls for clear-cut decisions to save lives in the future, not only in Albay but also in other disaster-prone areas in the country,” he said.

The President has ordered the allocation of millions of pesos to beef up the capability of the weather bureau to track weather disturbances.

“We cannot allow the threat of such a tragic incident (mudslides) to hover endlessly over thousands of people who are obviously in danger every time a weather disturbance hits the area,” Bunye said.

Classes suspended indefinitely

Thelma Bueson, Tabaco City Schools Division superintendent, issued a memorandum to all school heads in her division, instructing them to suspend classes.

She said further notice would be issued later.

Bueson’s memorandum came after Epifanio Buela, Albay Schools Division superintendent, issued a suspension order to school heads in the province.

Bueson said that based on her assessment, no classrooms could be used by the pupils because they were all destroyed by the typhoon.

She said there were rooms that could easily be restored and teachers were available, but the holding of classes was still impossible due to nonavailability of books and materials.

In addition, many children have no homes and clothes to wear.

“We may change the school calendar or make some adjustments in the holding of classes,” Bueson said.

Painfully slow

Shops are reopening and fixed telephone line service is back in parts of Albay, but reconstruction could take years, officials say.

Ms Arroyo, who visited the province on Tuesday, ordered a massive effort to get the devastated areas back on their feet before Christmas.

But work has been painfully slow, with public works staff and many government employees directly affected by the tragedy. Power and water services have yet to be restored, with kilometers of toppled power lines littering the roadsides.

Work on the damaged airport terminal building has yet to begin, as massive military aircraft arrive with much-needed relief aid.

“This will take several years to get us fully functioning again,” Gonzales said, noting that vast tracts of land planted with coconut, the area’s main agricultural product, are now covered in volcanic debris.

“There needs to be a comprehensive plan and a fresh approach in rebuilding,” he said, adding that the local government could prevent people and businesses from building close to the Mayon Volcano in future.

The civil defense office said the disaster destroyed or damaged 250,000 houses and affected 1.54 million people, nearly 83,000 of whom had sought refuge at evacuation centers.

Damage to buildings, infrastructure and agriculture is estimated at P1.2 billion.

“The magnitude of the disaster is so huge that even our economy will be affected for years,” Gonzales said.

Coconut industry

The coconut industry, which fuels the local economy, could take about seven years to recover. About 30 percent of the land destroyed by the volcanic debris was planted with millions of coconuts that were already bearing fruit.

“It would take us about three years to replant and up to seven years before they can start bearing fruit again,” the governor said.

Glenn Rabonza, head of the National Disaster Coordinating Council, said work in the coming days would be focused on clearing debris and restoring road links to isolated villages.

Supplies now are either flown in or taken by boat to the nearby port of Tabaco, but getting them to affected areas is a problem.

“The most important thing now is that no community is left isolated and starving,” Rabonza said.

‘How can we rebuild?

In the riverside village of Isarog near here, survivors are living in makeshift shelters and forced to scavenge for scraps and salvage broken appliances after a wall of mud crushed the village.

“How can we rebuild this place? I can’t say if I am lucky to be alive, because now we may starve to death after losing everything we had,” said Roger Aquino, 61, as he sat on the steel trusses of his buried house.

When the mudflow came, 19 family members, including his wife and adult children, were trapped inside the house he built 20 years ago. They survived only because a neighbor who heard their screams risked his life to tear open the roof.

Five days later, Aquino returned to the site to dig out a refrigerator and pairs of shoes that his grandchildren need.

“I am also looking for our documents ... passports and identification cards, that we need to start over again,” he said. *With reports from Tina G. Santos and AFP*

Justices hail . . .

From page A1

Court and a judiciary whose independence, integrity, credibility, and prestige have attained heights fully recognized nationally and globally,” the justices said.

A three-page acclamation letter to Panganiban was signed by Associate Justices Reynato Puno, Leonardo A. Quisumbing, Consuelo Ynares-Santiago, Angelina Sandoval-Gutierrez, Antonio T. Carpio, Ma. Alicia Austria-Martinez, Renato C. Corona, Conchita Carpio Morales, Romeo J. Callejo Sr., Adolfo Azcuna, Dante Tinga, Minita Chico-Nazario, Cancio Garcia and Presbitero J. Velasco.

1,200 ponencias, books

They also lauded Panganiban for his “unparalleled achievement in the highest court in the land, authoring (1,200) *ponencias* and a hundred separate opinions” and writing a series of books on the judiciary.

In a 12-page farewell speech to his colleagues, Panganiban thanked all those who helped him in his career, particularly Ms Arroyo, former President Fidel V. Ramos, former Senate President Jovito Salonga, former Chief Justice Andres R. Narvasa, and Philippine Daily Inquirer chair Marixi Prieto.

Rising from poverty which saw him selling newspapers in his childhood, Panganiban went on to graduate cum laude at the Far Eastern University and place sixth in the 1960 bar examinations.

He practiced law, engaged in the travel business, and became a president of the INQUIRER. He served as national vice chair and chief legal counsel of the Parish Pastoral Council for Responsible Voting, and was named by Pope John Paul II to a seat in the Pontifical Council for the Laity for the 1996-2001 term.

LEADERSHIP in landmark cases.

“Indeed, I have journeyed from being a poor newsboy in the backstreets of Sampaloc to being president of the most widely read newspaper in our country; from an ignorant Catholic to a member of the highest lay council of the Catholic Church; from a frustrated applicant for graduate studies to father of five wonderful children who each achieved my impossible dream of finishing in a pedigreed US university; from an aspiring chemical engineer to a reluctant lawyer and, finally, to the highest magistrate of our country,” he said.

Salonga as guru

In a speech titled “Maraming Salamat Po,” Panganiban said Ms Arroyo had not asked him any favors after she appointed him the country’s 21st Chief Justice.

He thanked Salonga for being “one person—outside of my immediate family—who has had the longest and perhaps the deepest influence in my life, career and faith (even if he is not a Catholic).”

“I met him some 50 years ago when he was my professor and dean at FEU. Since then up to the present, he has remained my lifetime guru and model of how to live a life worth living. He has taught me—both by word and example—not only the rudiments of the legal profession but, even more important, the purpose and value of life,” he said.

Panganiban said former Chief Justice Narvasa sparked his dream to be a legal eagle.

Boho! Ho! Santas’ laps are wet on by kids

From page A1

Santas get sneezed upon up to 10 times a day, fend off children pulling their beards and mop up after children who frequently wet their laps, according to the survey of hundreds of men who work as seasonal Santa Claus characters.

A third of all Santas reported having been wet on by a child, the survey said.

Nearly 90 percent of Santas said children pulled their beard every day to see if it’s real, and nearly half said children also tried to pull their glasses off every day, it said.

The survey was conducted for Auntie Anne’s Inc., a Gap, Pennsylvania-based franchiser with more than 900 Auntie Anne’s Pretzels locations, primarily in shopping malls, across the United States. The survey was conducted online by Brand IQ of 339 members of the Amalgamated Order of Real Bearded Santas.

More than 60 percent of Santas said they were sneezed or coughed upon up to 10 times each day, and three-quarters said they had up to 10 children cry while sitting on their laps every day, it said.

Back strain

Santas can suffer back strain from lifting children, exposure to contagious illnesses and overheating in their heavy Santa suits, according to Timothy Connaghan, head of the Santa association.

“There is more to it than just sitting in a chair. There is more to it than just a red suit,” said Connaghan, who has worked as a Santa for 38 years.

“Children can really put the wear and tear on you,” he added.

More than three-quarters of the children say they have been good during the year, but only half the Santas believe the children are telling the truth, according to the survey. *Reuters*

DILG seeks US advice vs NPA rebs

By Norman Bordadora

THE DEPARTMENT OF INTERIOR AND LOCAL Government and the Philippine National Police are seeking inputs from the United States regarding the country's recently adopted strategy against the armed insurgency and terrorist groups.

The DILG central office yesterday said Interior Assistant Secretary Danilo Valero and Sr. Supt. Asher Dolina, chief of the PNP-Criminal Investigation and Detection Group in Metro Manila, met with officials of the US Senate Committee on Homeland Security to discuss tactics against the "armed leftists and bandits."

"The US Senate committee will study a proposal by the Philippine government for stronger cooperation between Manila and Washington in dealing with overseas-based groups identified with the Communist Party of the Philippines-New People's Army," said DILG spokesperson Assistant Secretary Brian Yamsuan.

The CPP and the NPA were both tagged as foreign terrorist organizations by the US following the 9/11 terrorist attacks in 2001.

"This assurance was made by Brandon Milhorn, the committee's staff director in a Tuesday meeting with Assistant Secretary Valero at the Dirksen Senate Office Building in Washington," Yamsuan said.

The DILG and the PNP had proposed measures to the US Senate committee for the US government to keep closer tabs on so-called human rights groups and other front organizations of the CPP-NPA, particularly those currently based in the US.

Armed threats

"This, in the light of US laws that allow the seizure of assets of corporations, and expulsion from the US of foreign nationals, identified with FTO's," Yamsuan said.

Yamsuan said Milhorn was briefed on the heightened PNP efforts to deal with the threats posed by both communist insurgents and Muslim extremist groups "in sync with the firm commitment of the Arroyo administration to the US-led war on global terrorism."

President Macapagal-Arroyo last month vowed to take more decisive steps to "break the back" of the communist insurgency during the second half of her term, which ends in 2010.

This developed as the DILG called on regional information officers of the PNP to keep communities fully aware of PNP initiatives to shield them from crime and the threats brought about by insurgency and terrorism.

In a recent media workshop for regional police officers, Yamsuan made the call as he stressed the need for the PNP to strengthen its partnership with the communities and tap their support in the government's anticrime and anti-insurgency campaign.

"The PNP cannot fulfill its role as protectors of the people without the active participation of the community in its programs to maintain peace and order," Yamsuan said.

"Through these partnerships with the community, the PNP would bring the police closer to the people and inform them about the new policies and programs meant to better protect them from criminals, insurgents and terrorists," he added.

Yamsuan told regional deputy police directors for operation and regional public information officers of the PNP who attended the forum that as part of its information campaign, the national police force needs to counter the negative feedback that the government has been getting as a result of the allegedly "misleading, false and grossly padded information being peddled by leftist groups on the issue of political killings."

THE DAILY GOSPEL

Thursday, December 7, 2006
1st Week of Advent
Ambrose

1st Reading: Is 25:6-10
Gospel: Matthew 7:21, 24-27

Jesus said to his disciples, "Not everyone who says to me: Lord! Lord! will enter the kingdom of heaven, but the one who does the will of my heavenly Father.

"So, then, anyone who hears these words of mine and acts accordingly is like a wise man, who built his house on rock. The rain poured, the rivers flooded, and the wind blew and struck that house, but it did not collapse because it was built on rock. But anyone who hears these words of mine and does not act accordingly, is like a fool who built his house on sand. The rain poured, the rivers flooded, and the wind blew and struck that house; it collapsed, and what a terrible fall that was!"

Commentary

Dreams also come from singing as well as seeing. The song reminds us to be a nation that is faithful and just, and to live with a firm purpose of peace. This demands trust in the Lord. And the dream includes judgment: being humbled and brought down to the dust, or set as a strong city that protects. The judgment will be based on care of the poor and the needy in that nation. Do we hear the word of God and put it into practice? We are warned that it's not enough to cry out that God is our Lord, but we must work at making God's will the foundation of our lives.

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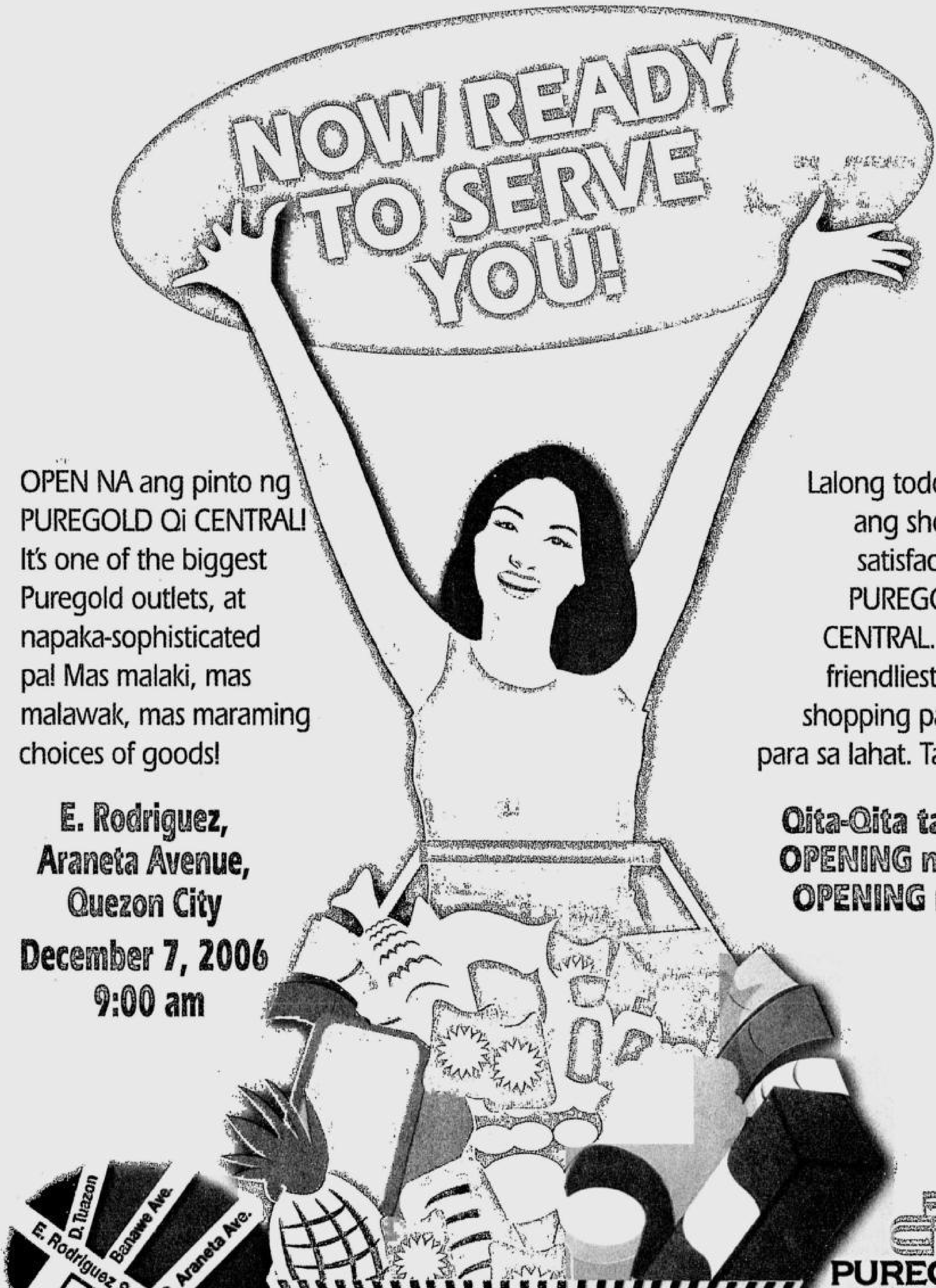
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Church to fight Con-ass; massive rallies set

From page A1

dameo condemned the haste with which allies of President Macapagal-Arroyo were pushing Charter change (Cha-cha) preparatory to a shift to the unicameral parliamentary system.

He described the move by administration lawmakers to rush Cha-cha as "fraudulently illegal and scandalously immoral."

Velarde, a spiritual adviser of the President, said he made the decision to lead the planned rally after the House demonstrated on Tuesday night the danger of how a future parliament could use the "arrogance of numbers" to brush the Constitution aside. *(Story on this page.)*

"We are now mobilizing a big rally tentatively set on Dec. 16 against this Con-ass by the House. We will ask everybody, not only our members but also all sectors of our society, to oppose this," he told the INQUIRER last night.

"We have to warn our people of the dangers of this parliament by the House alone. The public has to be warned about [the House's] hidden agenda," he said.

Even Chavit

Even Ilocos Sur Gov. Luis "Chavit" Singson, a staunch administration ally, is calling on Ms Arroyo to think twice about her endorsement of the Con-ass.

Singson, chair of the League of Governors of the Philippines, warned that the public might react adversely to the House's strategy, specifically the postponement of the May 2007 elections with the plan to establish an interim parliament from February to November.

"All elected officials have a fixed term, and they should not serve a day beyond that. Everyone will see it as self-serving," said Singson, who triggered the chain of events that led to the ouster of President Joseph Estrada and Ms Arroyo's rise to power in 2001.

Singson said the more prudent route to take was to proceed with the midterm elections and let the new leaders, with their fresh mandate, take up the issue of Cha-cha.

He said some of his peers and other local government officials shared his position against the Con-ass because they believed that their constituents wanted the elections to push through.

"If [the Con-ass proponents] will force the issue, it could lead to grave consequences," he said without elaborating.

In Makati, Mayor Jejomar Binay, president of the United Opposition (UNO), said the administration and its allies should expect protest rallies nationwide on Monday.

Binay said UNO, an alliance of opposition parties, would hold mass actions in Metro Manila and the provinces at the start of the workweek to protest the House's "illegal" change in rules.

"We expect all sectors to come—the civil society, the labor sector ... This will probably be broader than previous rallies we have staged because what [administration congressmen] did is simply too much. They destroyed the rules," Binay said at a press conference.

He said organizers had yet to finalize details but that the protest actions would most likely be held near the Batasang Pambansa in Quezon City, Batangas, Nueva Ecija and Cagayan de Oro, among others.

'Arrogance of numbers'

Velarde said he was "not calling for people power" and "only asking our people to be aware of their rights."

He said he was aghast and disappointed at the last-minute move of the House on Tuesday to amend the rules bypassing the Senate in amending the Charter.

"I call it arrogance of numbers. How can we trust the members of the new parliament when the action of its future members last [Tuesday] night was questionable?" he said.

Velarde said that because of the House move, he had "crossed the Rubicon" and was now calling for a constitutional convention (Con-con) as a mode of amending the Charter.

He said he would also try to convince the President to go for a Con-con.

"My major objection [to the parliamentary system proposed by the House] is the concentration of powers in the parliament. And what happened in the House [on Tuesday] made me change my mind. The members of the House showed their true colors," he said.

Velarde said the danger of the parliamentary setup being pushed by the House was the abolition of the presidency and the concentration of powers in the hands of the few in the parliament.

He said the loss of the presidency, which could provide a check and balance to the parliament, was unacceptable.

Velarde said he made this objection known to Speaker Jose de Venecia when the latter phoned him on Saturday to seek his endorsement of the House Con-ass.

He said he was in favor of a parliamentary system provided it retained the presidency. But De Venecia rejected this, he said.

"I reminded him that absolute power corrupts absolutely. And with what they did in the House, we can just imagine [what they will do later]," Velarde said.

Haste questionable, suspicious

CBCP's Lagdameo zeroed in on the House majority's success in revising the key rule that allowed deliberations on Cha-cha to skip the regular committee hearings and go directly to the plenary.

"We believe [this] is fraudulently illegal and scandalously immoral," the prelate of Jaro, Iloilo, wrote in the statement posted on his web blog.

Lagdameo questioned the congressmen's motives for rushing the process.

"It is perceivably self-serving on their part. Why can't they entrust [Cha-Cha] to others? Why are our administration congressmen desperately in a hurry? The haste is questionable and suspicious," he said, adding:

"Graft and corruption cannot be committed by the Constitution, but by the improper application of it. It is the people who are guilty of graft and corruption who need to change."

Lagdameo urged the faithful to implore heaven to bestow divine enlightenment on the administration lawmakers.

"God help us! God help our country!" he said.

Lagdameo reiterated his position that any amendment in the Charter should be made through a Con-con.

In an earlier interview, the prelate had said the CBCP was not opposed to Cha-cha because it recognized that certain sectors were calling for amendments.

"We only would like to register that the [Con-con] is a legitimate way of changing the Constitution and that the people's initiative and [Con-ass] are rather defective," he said.

He also reiterated the CBCP statement issued in January that the midterm elections should push through.

"The reasons for constitutional change must be based on the common good rather than on self-serving interests or the interests of political dynasties," he said.

Reaching out to Velarde

The Palace through Executive Secretary Eduardo Ermita acknowledged that the success of the Con-ass and the shift to the parliamentary system would be boosted big-time with Velarde's backing.

Ermita said it was important that Ms Arroyo's allies reach out and explain the Palace-House campaign to the El Shaddai leader.

"I am certain that the Speaker down to other senior officials and members of the House are getting in touch with Mike Velarde to explain the rationale behind what Congress is doing right now," Ermita told reporters.

"There are officials of government who are in constant contact with a person like Mike Velarde," he said.

Asked how important Velarde's support was in the Palace-House campaign, Ermita said: "It's very very important. You already said it—he has many supporters."

Press Secretary Ignacio Bunye said Malacañang was in full support of the House strategy.

"The House action was a bold political move in an attempt to overhaul the country's degenerated political system," Bunye said in a statement.

"We stand behind this initiative to take Philippine politics on the road to reform and transformation," he said.

Asked to comment on the House's method of rushing Cha-cha, Ermita said all these were part of the political exercise in the chamber.

"They set their own rules," he said. *With reports from Gil C. Cabacungan Jr., Christine O. Avendaño and Tarra V. Quismundo in Manila; Nestor P. Burgos Jr., Inquirer Visayas*

Villar: Senate ready to do battle on all fronts

From page A1

tem and establishing a parliamentary form of government.

He said these hurdles were in the House (whether it could muster the 195 signatures to approve the proposed changes to the Charter, in the Supreme Court (where the Senate would challenge the legality of a Senate-less Con-ass), and in the nationwide plebiscite (where the Senate would also campaign against the changes).

"The Senate is prepared to act on those three stumbling blocks, and we will do everything within our power to stop that (Con-ass)," Villar told reporters.

House Rule 15 changed

During an 11-hour marathon session that started at 5 p.m. on Tuesday, the House majority succeeded in striking down a rule providing for two-chamber action on Cha-cha proposals.

With only 25 opposition lawmakers objecting, 161 administration lawmakers easily changed House Rule 15 by striking out a sentence that requires proposed constitutional amendments to go through the usual legislative mill and, in effect, calls for the concurrence or rejection of the Senate.

The new rule now simply reads: "Proposals to amend or revise the Constitution shall be by a resolution which may be filed at any time by any member."

Emotions ran high during the session, with many opposition lawmakers angrily denouncing the haste with which the "Cha-cha Express" was being driven in the House, and what they perceived as the wanton violation of the rules.

According to the majority, everything was being done in accordance with the Constitution, and the changing of the rule was done precisely to correct a legal infirmity because the Constitution does not specifically provide for separate voting on amending the Charter.

If not for the delaying tactics employed by the minority, the rest of Tuesday's session could have been a lark for Speaker Jose de Venecia, who managed to rustle up an impressive attendance of House members, their number comparable only to the crowd during President Macapagal-Arroyo's annual State of the Nation Address.

'Haste makes waste'

But the opposition members led by Minority Leader Francis Escudero forced the House leadership to a seemingly endless debate on procedural issues.

At one point during the session, Rep. Constantino Jaraula, De Venecia's Cha-cha pointman, and Senior Deputy Majority Leader Arthur Defensor said the minority was "imagining things."

"They (the majority) actually wanted to lay the predicate whereby the Senate can be ignored, if and when they make the actual proposal to amend the Constitution. And they won that vote insofar as amending the rules are concerned. But they forgot to amend other provisions of our rules, which provide for the right thing to do," Escudero said yesterday.

He added: "Actually, it boils down to a saying in English, 'Haste makes waste.' Now they are entangled in a legal quagmire they cannot get away from. They are giving the Supreme Court a walk in the park insofar as ruling against whatever they [had approved] is concerned. They pulled out all the stops."

'Garapal'

Villar described as "brazen" the House's last-minute move to amend its rules stating that changes in the Charter could be done like the regular bills, meaning requiring the concurrence of the Senate.

"They are really bent on doing it. They will ram it through and that's the only way they can force it—*garapal,*" Villar said.

Sen. Richard Gordon, chair of the Senate committee on constitutional amendments, also denounced the "brazen" way with which the House moved to force the Con-ass "in the dead of night," and while many Filipinos were still reeling from the devastation of Supertyphoon "Reming."

Senate Minority leader Aquilino Pimentel Jr. said the House move was "a shameless betrayal of the public trust."

Sen. Panfilo Lacson described it as "nothing short of constitutional rape."

But De Venecia insisted yesterday that the Senate would "not be bypassed."

"We will invite the senators to join us and exercise their sacrosanct duty to [take part] in the discussion on the proposed Charter amendments. The Filipino people are tired of the present presidential system and its failings. The bicameral setup is like a company which has two boards of directors making policy," he said.

Separate vote

Villar said he was set to present a new resolution to the senators reiterating their position in a unanimous March 2006 resolution that the Senate and the House must vote separately when proposing changes to the Charter as a Con-ass.

He said the Senate was also long prepared to file a petition in the Supreme Court against the House-only Con-ass.

Villar also said the Senate was prepared to mount a showdown in case a plebiscite would be called to ratify the changes proposed by the House.

"After the Supreme Court, the final stumbling block [to the House plan] is the referendum which, I believe, they cannot win," he said.

According to the Senate's legal eagles, Senators Joker Arroyo and Franklin Drilon, the time for the chamber to intervene is when the House has approved the amendments and asked the Commission on Elections to set a date for the plebiscite—a requirement for constitutional changes to take effect.

"That is the proper time because it is at that time when there is a justiciable case. At that point, they will be asking the Comelec to spend taxpayers' money for a patently illegal exercise of the plebiscite, and therefore the Supreme Court can issue a restraining order," Drilon said.

"The Senate can only act if they (the House) approved the amendments or revisions and they transmit it to the Comelec for a plebiscite," Arroyo said.

To go or not to go

Sen. Miriam Defensor-Santiago yesterday said President Macapagal-Arroyo had been asking administration senators to join the Con-ass in the House.

"Oh, she's been doing that consistently all the time, whether [in the] people's initiative or now this Con-ass. She has never been shy about making her views known that she wants her administration senators to go," she said.

But Santiago said she and other administration senators Lito Lapid, Ramon "Bong" Revilla Jr. and Ralph Recto were having difficulty in deciding whether they should take part in the Con-ass.

"We're having a problem because this is a legal issue, never been resolved by our Supreme Court, and naturally we don't want to be on the losing side of history," she said.

Lapid told the INQUIRER he would not attend the Con-ass if he would be by his lonesome.

But after attending the caucus of 18 senators last night, Lapid said he would not join the Con-ass.

"Let them do their thing there; we'll do ours here. There should be a separate vote. We have a resolution here [reiterating our position] and I'm standing by it," he told reporters in Filipino at the session hall.

"I'm sure they're not going to get the support of the majority here because they're going to abolish us. Definitely, I'm not going to attend," he said, expressing confidence that Ms Arroyo would not impute "malice" in his position.

Revilla declined to say whether he would go. "Give me up to Monday. This is a big decision, but at this time I have no commitment," he said.

Villar said the presence of a few senators would not make the Con-ass valid.

"If [some senators go], it means some senators are present, but not the Senate," he said.

Man-to-man guarding

He also said the Senate had to pass a resolution before the chamber could be said to be part of the Con-ass.

Santiago said both sides would have a busy weekend:

"I understand from Congressman [Prospero] Pichay that by Monday or Tuesday they will send out their invitation to the Senate to join the convention. This will be a working weekend for the members of Congress because [each side], opposition and administration, will be fighting to keep its troops in line and make sure there will be no defection.

"Saturday and Sunday will be when opposition and administration leaders will conduct man-to-man canvassing of every senator." *With a report from TJ Burgonio*

Puno is Chief Justice; delay in appointment favors Con-ass

From page A1

upon reaching the age of 70.

Ermita said that Puno had to be sworn in late in consideration of Panganiban's retirement which actually took effect at midnight.

Deferring the appointment of a new Chief Justice to replace Panganiban may benefit proponents of the Palace-backed constituent assembly (Con-ass) to amend the Charter, a highly placed source privy to Supreme Court matters said Tuesday night.

The source, who spoke on condition of anonymity because of the sensitive nature of the subject, said a divided vote in the high court could stop the issuance of a temporary restraining order on a plebiscite that would approve the amendments to be proposed.

The House majority is bent on proposing a shift to the unicameral parliamentary form of government that will abolish both chambers of Congress. It has amended the House rule that requires the Senate's concurrence on the proposed measures, and plans a House-only Con-ass.

According to procedure, once the Con-ass decides on the proposed amendments, the Commission on Elections will be asked to set a plebiscite not earlier than 60 days and not later than 90 days.

If a TRO is sought to stop the plebiscite while the act of the House is being questioned, it may not be issued.

"If there is no new Chief Justice, it may be favorable to [the Con-ass proponents]," the official said. "If the voting is 7-7, no TRO will be issued because a majority of the votes is needed."

Acting Chief Justice

A Chief Justice may issue a TRO on his own, as has been done in the past. "But if there's no Chief Justice, who's going to issue the TRO?" the official said.

Sen. Miriam Defensor-Santiago's pronouncements appear to be laying the grounds for such a scenario.

Earlier saying she was "foaming at the mouth" at being excluded from the short list of candidates for Chief Justice, the senator announced that she would ask President Macapagal-Arroyo at an apparent make-or-break meeting scheduled last night to defer naming a permanent replacement for Panganiban.

REYNATO PUNO: First among equals in the Supreme Court.

She said an acting Chief Justice should instead be named because of the purported failure of the judiciary's nomination process.

But this has no precedent, the highly placed source said, adding that while the appointment of a successor may be made within 90 days following the retirement of a new Chief Justice, the position had always been filled immediately.

The source warned that the appointment of an acting Chief Justice might be confusing for the high court.

"What would be the powers of an acting Chief Justice?" the source said, pointing out that while, for instance, the Chief Justice had the sole exclusive power to approve the disbursements and expenditures of the Judiciary Development Fund, it was not clear if an acting Chief Justice could do the same.

Technically correct

The source also said House Deputy Minority Leader Rolex Suplico was "technically" correct in saying that the Supreme Court could not interfere in the House's move to amend its rules governing proposed changes in the Constitution because this was an internal matter.

There must be a "justiciable cause," or a question of law, before the high court can intervene, the source said.

As for the contentious issue of whether the Senate and the House should vote separately or as one on the proposed amendments, the source presented two arguments—both valid:

- Separate voting is "commonsensical" because Congress has two chambers.
- The wording of the Constitution is clear, and it does not say that there should be separate voting. What it says is that any amendment or revision may be proposed by Congress upon a vote of three-fourths of all its members.

The source also said that even if the Senate as a body condemned the convening of the Con-ass without its consent, some senators might join the assembly—a move that might be considered a participation of all members of Congress. With a report from Christine Avendaño

Albay solon hits gov't drift on population control

By Philip C. Tubeza

THE COMMISSION ON POPULATION (PopCom) decision to promote only natural family planning methods threatens to reverse government gains in slowing down the country's population growth, legislators warned yesterday.

The PopCom was going against the people's "basic right to health and informed choice," said Albay Rep. Edcel Lagman in reaction to the commission's announcement of its new direction in policy at the National Population Congress yesterday.

The PopCom, an attached agency of the National Economic and Development Authority, is the central coordinating and policy-making body of the government on population.

According to Lagman, the PopCom's new policy direction would be focusing only on providing natural family planning services from the national down to the barangay level, leaving "other methods to the discretion of local governments."

"This program direction of PopCom will reverse the gains in lowering fertility and slowing down population growth to propel national development," said Lagman, the principal author of the proposed Responsible Parenthood and Population Management Act, or HB 3773.

"It is impossible to achieve the government's 1.9 percent population growth rate target if PopCom would disregard other legally permissible and medically safe family planning methods," he said.

Lagman and other co-authors of HB 3773 argued that natural methods of family planning "are not for everyone."

They cited various surveys of the National Statistics Office which revealed that Filipinos prefer modern family planning methods, with pills coming out consistently as the No. 1 method of choice.

"Natural family planning is not for everyone, therefore you will isolate the majority of women who prefer modern and artificial methods," said party-list Rep. Risa Hontiveros.

She said focusing only on natural methods deprives women of universal access to the whole range of family planning methods "so that they can choose what is most appropriate for their bodies, in accordance, of course, with their beliefs."

LAGMAN

"This is an escapist strategy of addressing reproductive health and population concerns," said Cavite Rep. Gilbert Remulla, a member of the board of the Philippine Legislators Committee on Population and Development (PLCPD).

The PLCPD is a group of legislators who have been pushing for a national law on population and development since the 9th Congress.

Bukidnon Rep. Nereus Acosta, PLCPD chair, said the PopCom's decision to promote only natural family planning methods showed that the country needed a definitive national policy on population.

"Otherwise, national agencies can always change their policies and programs depending on the whim of whoever is in power, and conveniently point at the LGUs to assume their responsibility as national agencies," Acosta said.

Alano; 67

EULALIA "LILY" Barairo Alano, a retired public school teacher of San Nicolas and Balayan, Batangas, died yesterday. She was 67.

She is survived by her children Jun, Solly, Bright and Yoyoy, grandchildren Zasha, Razel, James, Lorenz, Jaja, Janel and Jared, great grandson Luigi, brothers Berting and Conrad, sisters Nida and Doring, nephews, nieces and in-laws.

Her remains lie at the family residence in Barangay Gumamela, Balayan, Batangas. Interment will be announced later.

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3. Bidding will be conducted through open competitive bidding procedures using non-discretionary pass/fail criteria as specified in the Implementing Rules and Regulations Part A (IRR-A) of Republic Act 9184 (R.A. 9184), otherwise known as the "Government Procurement Reform Act." Only Bids from Bidders who pass the eligibility check will be opened. The bidder with the Lowest Calculated Bid (LCB) shall advance to the post-qualification stage in order to finally determine responsiveness of the bid to technical and financial requirements of the project. The contract shall then be awarded to the Lowest Calculated and Responsive Bidder (LCRB) who was determined as such during the post-qualification procedure.
4. Interested Bidders may obtain further information from the BAC Secretariat and inspect the Bidding Documents starting **December 4, 2006** from 8:00AM to 5:00 PM.
5. A complete set of Bidding Documents may be purchased from **December 8-15, 2006** by interested Bidders from the BAC Secretariat and upon payment of a nonrefundable fee in the amount of **Three Thousand Three Hundred Forty Pesos (Php3,340.00)**. The method of payment will be cash or check payable to PRA. The Bidding Documents shall be received personally by the prospective Bidder or his authorized representative.
6. The PRA will hold a Pre-Bid Conference open to all interested parties on **December 13, 2006** at 10:00 A.M. at the PRA Conference Room, 8th Floor Legaspi Towers 200, Paseo de Roxas, Makati City.
7. Bids and eligibility requirements must be delivered to the PRA (7th Floor) Office on or before **January 4, 2007** at 1:00 P.M. (PRA wall clock time). All Bids must be accompanied by a Bid security in the form and amount indicated in the BDS. Late Bids shall not be accepted.
8. Bid opening shall be on **January 4, 2007** at 1:15 P.M. at the PRA Conference Room, 8th Floor Legaspi Towers 200, Paseo de Roxas, Makati City. Bids will be opened in the presence of the Bidders' representatives who choose to attend.
9. Pursuant to BIR Revenue Regulations 03-2005, all prospective bidders are mandated to file their income and business tax returns electronically using the Electronic Filing and Payment System (EFPS).
10. The PRA assumes no responsibility whatsoever to compensate or indemnify bidders for any expenses incurred in the preparation of the bid.
11. The PRA reserves the right to accept or reject any Bid, to annul the bidding process, and to reject all Bids at any time prior to contract award, without thereby incurring any liability to the affected Bidder or Bidders.

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(PDI–Nov. 30 & Dec. 7, 2006)

BIR: Large taxpayers coughed up 15% more

THE BUREAU OF INTERNAL REVENUE posted a 15 percent increase in collections from the country's 1,081 large taxpayers in the last 10 months compared to collections during the same period last year, BIR Commissioner Jose Mario Buñag said.

In his report to the Congressional Oversight Committee on Comprehensive Tax Reform Program, Buñag said that total collections by the tax agency's Large Taxpayers Service (LTS) now stood at P275.009 billion.

Buñag attributed the increase to the "benchmarking method" and commended the effective implementation of the LTS group headed by Asst. Commissioner Nestor Valeroso.

With only a month left to collect, Valeroso urged large taxpayers "to be more patriotic" by complying fully with their tax duties to help the tax agency meet its P675.3 billion tax assignment this year.

To meet its goal of collecting 53% of the BIR's total revenue goal of P675.3 billion for 2006, the LTS met with representatives of large taxpayers from the automotive, mining, chemical manufacturing, tobacco, cement, alcohol, insurance, airlines, real estate, and food manufacturing industries to inform them about the benchmarking method.

The benchmarking procedure takes a look at taxpayers engaged in a similar line of industry and identifies who are paying below the minimum amount for tax compliance purposes, he stressed.

The cycle of benchmarking starts from data gathering using the Financial Statements (FS) attached to the returns filed by taxpayers. The BIR then establishes a benchmark and prepares recommendations for surveillance and inventory stocktaking. The system encourages voluntary tax compliance by large taxpayers who belong to the same industry with the BIR setting up a standard in measuring their compliance with regard to income tax and net value-added tax (VAT) due.

Valeroso initiated the benchmarking's implementation at the regional level when he was the director of Revenue Region No. 7-Quezon City. When he became LTS chief, he introduced the benchmarking system to the country's large taxpayers from various industries.

Other programs implemented by the LTS to enhance collection included taxpayer profiling, holding of more tax dialogues, implementation of the reinvented tax compliance verification drive or tax mapping operations, intensified monitoring of excisable taxpayers, quality audit and investigation, inventory stocktaking or spot checking, maximum utilization of computer assisted audit, "No Operation Returns" project, and strict implementation of rules in the issuance of tax credit certificates (TCC) and tax debit memos (TDM).

Cynthia D. Balana

Asean heads for 'open skies'

KUALA LUMPUR—FOUR SOUTHEAST Asian nations have agreed to permit unlimited flights among each other as the region heads towards an "open skies" policy by 2008. Brunei, Indonesia, Malaysia and the Philippines will sign a pact to free up air links at a meeting of Southeast Asian nations in the Philippines next week, Malaysian state news agency Bernama reported on Wednesday.

"It marks a milestone development towards aviation liberation within Asean countries," it quoted Malaysian Transport Minister Chan Kong Choy as saying, and added that the pact would allow unlimited flights among 13 cities in the four countries.

Only airlines designated by the respective governments can participate, however.

The cities involved are Bandar Seri Begawan, the capital of Brunei; the cities of Balikpapan, Manado, Pontianak and Tarakan in Indonesia; the towns of Kota Kinabalu, Kuching, Labuan and Miri in Malaysia; and Davao City, General Santos, Puerto Princesa and Zamboanga in the Philippines, Bernama said.

Asean, which includes Brunei, Cambodia, Indonesia, Laos, Malaysia, Myanmar, the Philippines, Singapore, Thailand and Vietnam, hopes that liberalization of passenger and air cargo services by the end of 2008 will help promote the group's goal of creating an economic community in Southeast Asia.

Reuters

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MY HOPE

RP gains foothold as preferred hub for equipment makers

By Ronnel W. Domingo

THE PHILIPPINES HAS "GAINED a foothold" as a preferred location of original equipment manufacturers, government and electronics industry officials said yesterday.

In a statement at the regional electronics trade show and forum at the Makati Shangri-La Hotel, Trade Secretary Peter B. Favila said the country was well-positioned to take advantage of the growth in electronics manufacturing services (EMS) as well as original design manufacturing (ODM).

He cited the availability of highly skilled engineers and the ability of firms to protect their intellectual property rights and to meet clients' schedules.

Favila said multinational OEM (original equipment manufacturing) firms were eyeing new prospects with clients and suppliers at a time when market research projections show that demand for EMS and ODM may reach $328.4 billion in the next four years.

Electronics sector

He said yesterday's first Asean (Association of Southeast Asian Nations) Electronics Business Opportunities Exhibition and Conference was held in a bid to fast-track the integration of the electronics sector within the region.

Under the initiatives for Asean economic integration, the Philippines was assigned as the lead country for the electronics sector—one of 11 priority industries seen to help push a common Asean market.

The other 10 sectors include agro-based products, air travel and air transport, automotive products, software, fisheries, healthcare, rubber-based products, textiles and apparels, tourism and wood-based products.

Organized by the Department of Trade and Industry and the Semiconductor Industries Association in the Philippines, the AE-BOEC allowed 20 manufacturers and at least 200 component suppliers from across the region to explore possible tie-ups.

Favila said the AE-BOEC was expected to promote intra-Asean trade and increase outsourcing by having a single production and supply base for all electronics products.

According to the DTI's Center for International Trade Expositions and Missions, the event was also aimed at enabling Asean members to have the competitive advantage for regional cost benefits, particularly in supply chains; and exploring business possibilities for Asean brands and products traded within the region.

Favila said this was very helpful for the Philippines considering that global companies like Intel, Texas Instruments, and NXP (former Philips) operate assembly and test facilities in the country for microprocessors and digital signal processors or DSPs that are used in cellular phones.

DSP needs

"In fact, these facilities provide 100 percent of Nokia's DSP needs and 80 percent of Siemen's and Sony Ericsson's demand," he said.

Frederick L. Blancas, a manager with IMI Philippines, said the company expected to develop new contacts in Asean for its raw materials such as active and passive parts, integrated circuits, plastic parts, metal parts, flexible printed circuits, multilayer printed circuit boards, and machining parts.

IMI is a provider of EMS and serves some of the world's largest manufacturer of optical and hard disk drive, communications, industrial, consumer, and automotive electronics.

"As our pool of clientele grows, we are continuously seeking for suppliers who can guarantee on-time delivery of high quality and competitively-priced materials," Blancas said.

He said Filipino workers have been regarded as one of the best in Asia, but to stay afloat in the electronics sector, the country must identify the best sources for different materials used in electronics manufacturing.

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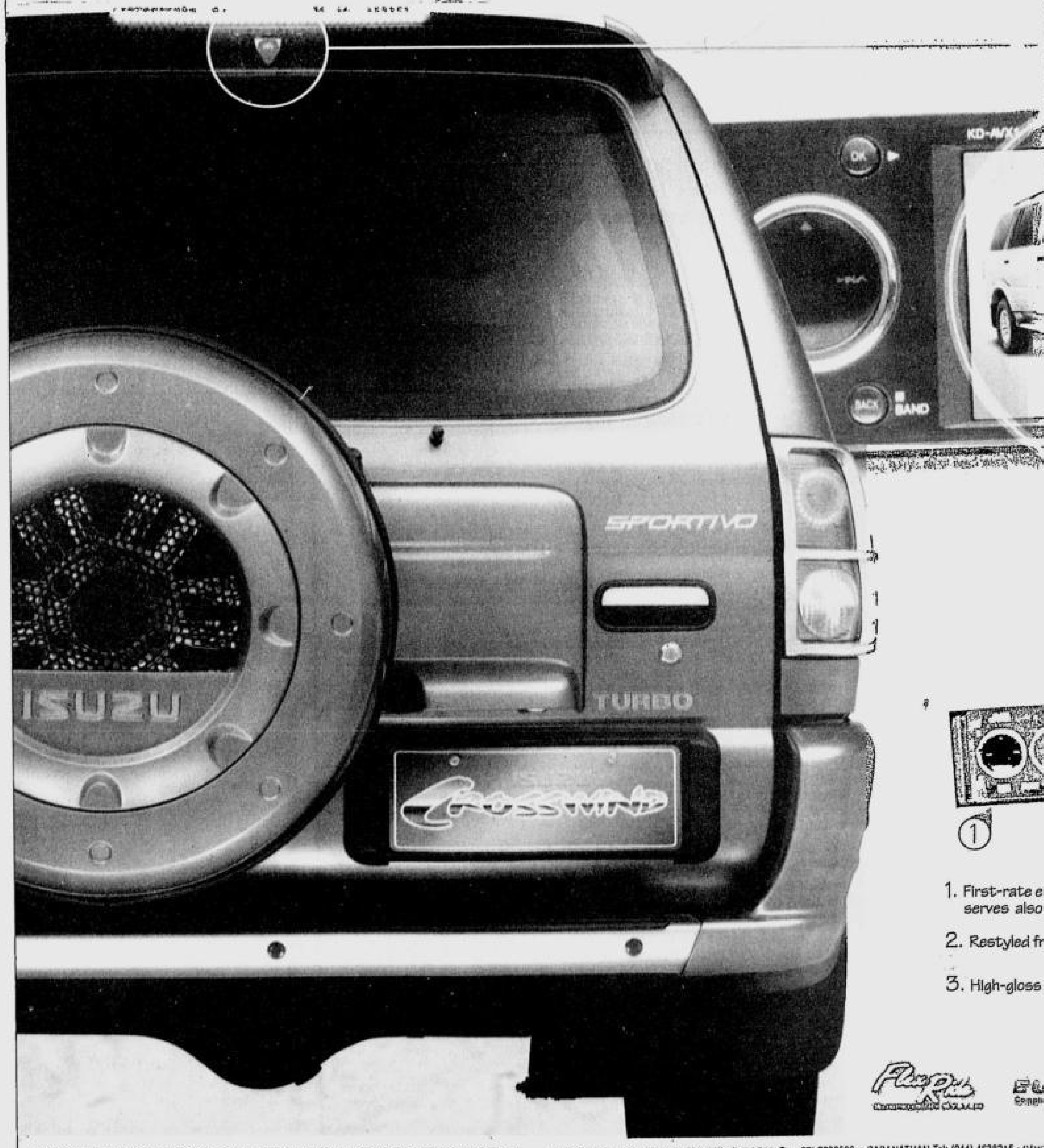

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ANTIDOTE TO COUP

Go out and vote, soldiers urged

By Dona Pazzibugan

THE BEST ANTIDOTE TO A coup d'etat is to go out and vote.

Philippine Army leaders are encouraging soldiers to register with the Commission on Elections so they can vote in 2007, hoping the exercise of suffrage would discourage further uprisings in the military.

Army Chief Lt. Gen. Romeo Tolentino issued the "guidance" last month, and groups of soldiers have been going in truckloads to Comelec offices nationwide to register.

Army spokesperson Maj. Ernesto Torres Jr. said there was "nothing sinister" in encouraging soldiers to register.

"Voting in elections educate soldiers to adhere to and uphold the democratic process rather than resort to any other unacceptable or violent means that would be detrimental to the country," he said.

"Instead of resorting to illegal actions to change the government, they are encouraged to go out and register and vote," he added.

The Comelec has given previously registered voters who have not voted in the last two consecutive elections until Dec. 31 to register again so they can vote in the May 2007 elections.

Last February, elite units from the Marines, the Army's Scout Rangers and the Philippine National Police Special Action Force were implicated in a plot to oust President Macapagal-Arroyo through a military withdrawal of support.

Thirty officers led by former Marine commandant Maj. Gen. Renato Miranda, former Scout Ranger commander Brig. Gen. Danilo Lim and Marine Col. Ariel Querubin now face court-martial for mutiny and conduct unbecoming an officer and a gentleman.

Another 125 Army enlisted personnel implicated in the plot face summary dismissal proceedings.

Meanwhile the six Scout Ranger officers who have been cleared of the charges are waiting for their release from detention. They will not be reinstated in the Scout Rangers, the Army said.

"The decision to assign them elsewhere was arrived at after the individual and organizational interests were considered," said Scout Ranger commander Col. Reynaldo Mapagu.

The two Marine officers who have been similarly absolved will also no longer be assigned to their previous posts.

Soldiers are like absentee voters who can only vote for the national positions.

They vote a few days election day as they are on red alert status on the day of the elections.

Recently resigned defense secretary Avelino Cruz Jr. has stressed that the military should be insulated from partisan politics.

He said the military should not be involved in election duties to avoid another "Hello Garci" scandal, where top military officials were implicated in alleged election-rigging.

Under Cruz's initiative, the Department of National Defense entered into an agreement with the Comelec last Oct. 12 to spare the military from election duties.

3 labor execs face axe

By Jerome Aning

A TOP OFFICIAL OF THE NATIONal Labor Relations Commission and two lawyers of the Philippine Overseas Employment Administration who were charged last week with extorting money from a recruiter will be suspended, according to Labor Secretary Arturo Brion.

Brion was supposed to meet last night with NLRC Chair Gerardo Nograles concerning the fate of the erring commissioner, Victoriano Calaycay.

If Nograles does not suspend Calaycay, Brion said he would make the recommendation himself to the Office of the President and send the documents on the extortion case to the Presidential Anti-Graft Commission.

He said POEA Administrator Rosalinda Dimapilis-Baldoz has already suspended Calaycay's alleged accomplices, POEA lawyers Zomer Ochavillo and Augustus Hidalgo.

The Trade Union Congress of the Philippines urged the Office of the Ombudsman to subject Calaycay, Ochavillo and Hidalgo to lifestyle checks and file graft cases against them.

"This case should serve as a lesson to all rotten magistrates and officers of the labor justice system," said TUCP secretary-general Ernesto Herrera.

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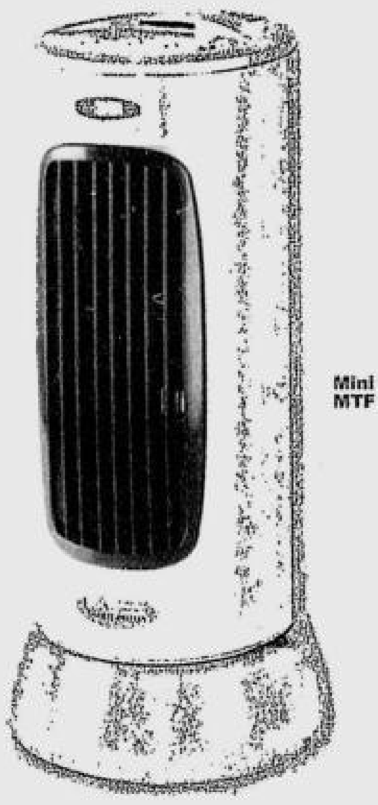

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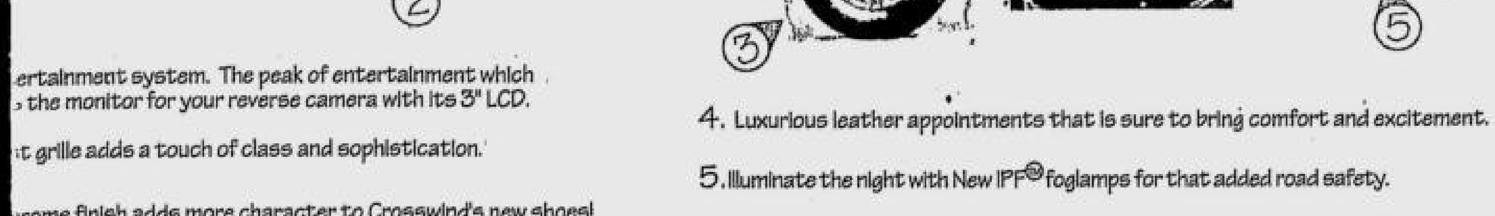

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OPINION

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The Philippine Daily Inquirer, Inc. has its business and editorial offices at
•Chino Roces Ave corner Yague and Mascardo Sts., Makati City
•P.O. Box 2353 Makati Central Post Office 1263 Makati City
•Our telephone numbers are 897-8808 connecting all departments
•Editorial Fax 897-4793 / 897-4794 •Advertising 897-4807
•Circulation 527-3342 / 527-3348 / 528-0183 / 528-0186 and 528-0213 / Fax: 528-02-34.
•Subscription Hotline 896-6000

'Company of idiots'

EDITORIAL

DURING HER RECENT ATTEMPT TO SCALE THE summit of the legal profession, Sen. Miriam Defensor-Santiago had an epiphany. The lawyer and former judge suddenly realized that contrary to the popular notion that the Supreme Court was home to some of the country's best legal minds, it was actually filled with idiots. Having thus seen the light, she told her Senate colleagues last Monday, she had asked President Macapagal-Arroyo not to appoint her anymore as chief justice because she "preferred the company of my colleagues in the Senate, anytime, any day, any year to the company of those idiots of the Supreme Court."

Apparently she didn't regard the justices with such contempt until very recently. In fact, she seemed to be more than just tickled by the idea of becoming the country's first female chief justice, and pursued it assiduously. On Tuesday last week, when she and five sitting justices were scheduled to go through a public interview by the Judicial and Bar Council, she confessed that she was still "cross-eyed and dizzy" after preparing all night. She later decided not to go through with the interview after learning that the other nominees had asked to be excused. Even then, she dismissed her rivals as "extremely shy" and suffering from "personality defects." She then cockily declared that she would not insist on being interviewed so as not to put them "at an unfair disadvantage."

Santiago's bubble burst when the JBC dropped her name from the list of nominees it submitted to President Arroyo. To complete her humiliation, it was revealed that only one among its eight members had voted for her. And that is what provoked Santiago's manic outburst on the Senate floor which was unprecedented in its venom and vulgarity.

In a privilege speech Monday, Santiago accused Chief Justice Artemio Panganiban of plotting to block her appointment as chief justice because she was "perceived to be an intimate political ally of the President." But she said she was no longer interested in the position if she was going to be "surrounded by idiots." She added that she would rather be "in another environment but not in the Supreme Court of idiots."

"I am not angry, Mr. President," Santiago fumed. "I am irate. I am foaming in the mouth. I'm homicidal. I'm suicidal. I'm humiliated, debased, degraded. And not only that, I feel like throwing up to be living my middle years in a country of this nature. I am nauseated. I spit on the face of Chief Justice Artemio Panganiban and his cohorts in the Supreme Court."

Those are not words parents would want their children to hear. That is not language anyone would recommend for use in polite society. And even in Congress, where lawmakers should be given the widest latitude to express their views, such vituperation couched in such vile language ought not to be tolerated. Not even if it is a senator who is speaking. Not even if it is a lady who is speaking. Not even if it is Santiago who is ranting and raving.

Were the other senators too stunned by her tirade to react? Were they intimidated by her and fearful she would turn her wrath on them if they tried to calm her down or request her to temper her words? Or were they signaling their agreement and approval by their silence?

At the end of Santiago's tantrum, at least three senators went over to shake her hand. They probably felt privileged to hear her speak that way and considered it a supreme compliment that she "preferred" to remain with them instead of joining the company of "idiots" in the Supreme Court.

Truly, they deserve each other.

Coexistence

FOREIGN COMMENT

TURKEY IS ONE OF THOSE SENSITIVE AREAS WHERE THE smallest of divisions can generate an earthquake, where even slight friction dangerously overheats the tectonic plates, but where it is also possible to create bridges, trade in merchandise and thoughts, compare lifestyles and inspiring principles.

It is there that Benedict XVI will have the possibility to reaffirm in front of Christian counterparts of other denominations, Muslims and secular people of different leanings what the papal teachings of the last 40 years never tired of repeating: A coexistence based on peace and dialogue is possible because there can be "no violence in the name of God" and "faith in God, Creator of the universe and Father of all, cannot but promote between men relations of universal brotherhood." *La Stampa (Turin, Italy)*

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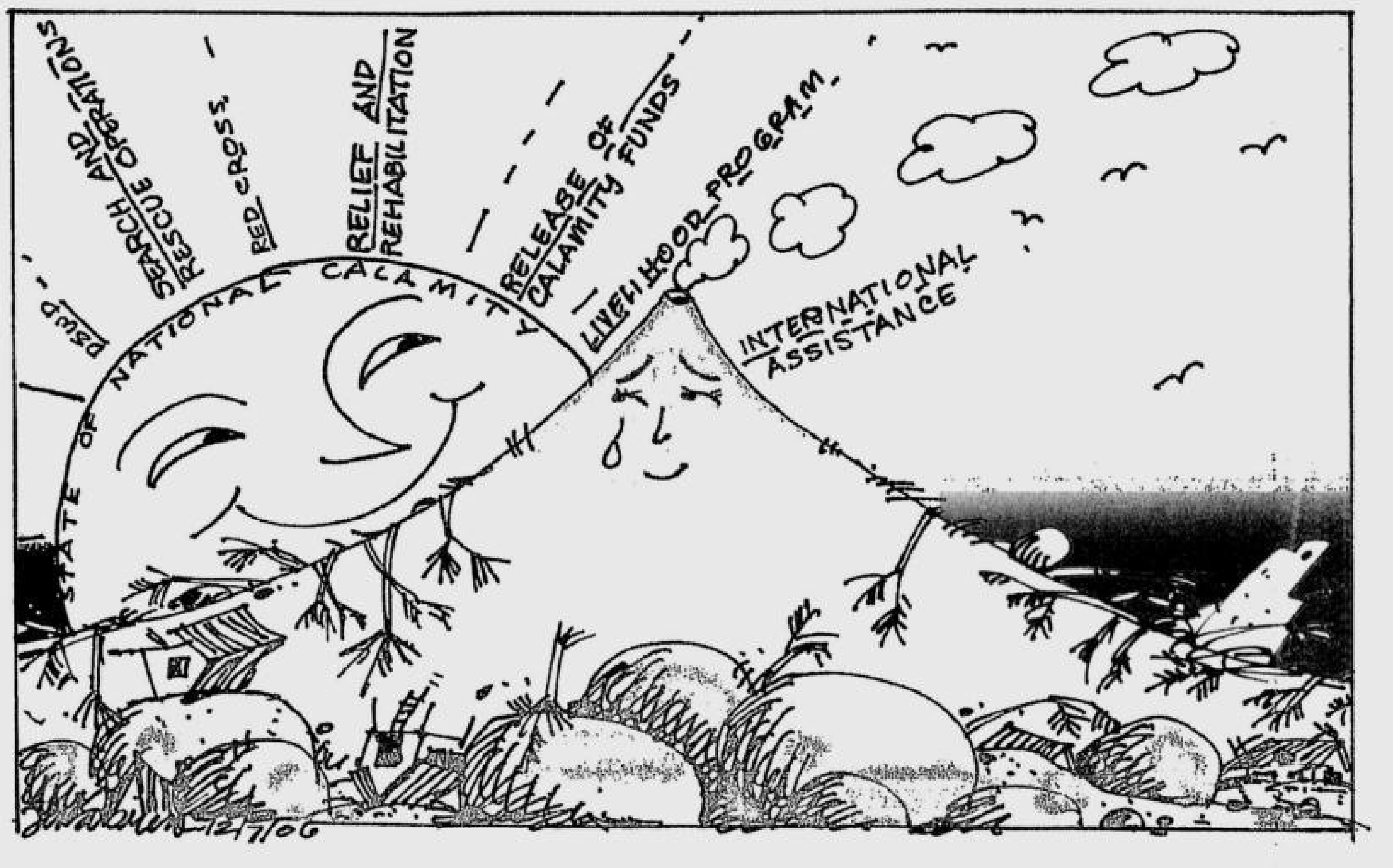
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A hush-hush problem

VIEWPOINT

Juan L. Mercado

COME SUNDAY, WE MARK "HUMAN RIGHTS Day." In this country, the most fractured right is that of a child to celebrate his or her first birthday. Out of every 1,000 kids, 27 never make it to their first birthday. And in the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao, infant mortality rate stands at 42.

For too many of us, those tiny rough-hewn coffins on country roads or city alleys, form part of the landscape. Malnutrition, lack of water, poor sanitation and medical care take their toll. In Basilan, for example, 66 out of every 100 infants lack safe water. Health personnel attend to only 58 out of every 100 births here, compared to 99 for Thailand.

These are preventable deaths. When Asean leaders meet in Cebu next week, Malaysia can report that its infant mortality rate is down to seven. Singapore whittled that down to four. Among infants born to poor families, the death rate is "two to three times higher than those for the rich," Asian Development Bank notes. Yet, more children could have blown out a birthday candle—if only our leaders were not obsessed with more "crucial" issues. Like what? Like rewriting a Constitution to ensure they can cling to office forever?

Yet, the solutions are simple and affordable. Providing clean water can save most of the 1.8 million children who die yearly from diarrhea, says the 2006 United Nations report "Beyond Scarcity: Power, Poverty and the Global Water Crisis." And installing a flush toilet in the home, increases by 59 percent a child's chances of surviving up to the first birthday.

Released in Capetown this week, HDR 2006's theme is simple: Access to safe, affordable water and improved sanitation "should be considered a basic human right." This right can be quantified: all citizens must get a minimum of 20 liters of clean water per day—especially the poorest.

The root problem is not the lack of resources. "Rather, it is the priorities of political leaders," the report stresses. "If we continue with business as usual, 234 million people will miss the Millennium Development Goals to halve the proportion of people without safe water by 2015 .... If we fail in the water and sanitation goal, the hope of reaching the other seven MDGs also rapidly fades," write Kemal Dervis and Trevor Manuel in "Fraternite Matin."

The World Water Forum, now meeting in Mexico, will find that the city resembles Cebu. Water is being pumped out of its aquifers at twice the replenishment rates, resulting in cracked cathedrals, ground subsidence, dry wells. As in Cebu, mining of groundwater lowered the water table in parts of India and Pakistan by 30 meters in the past three decades.

Water use is increasing at twice the rate of population growth, the International Herald Tribune notes. And the amount available per person is shrinking. Over the next 25 years, the number of people in countries with water crises will increase from 700 million to 2.2 billion, writes UNDP's Kevin Watkins.

Twentieth-century water management models treated water as an endless free resource: exploited, dammed or diverted without reference to scarcity or sustainability. Now, "rivers, lakes and watersheds have been taken beyond frontiers of ecological sustainability by policymakers who turned a blind eye to the consequences of over-exploitation."

From the Philippines, Kenya to Nicaraugua and Jamaica—the poor pay for water five to 10 times more than those who live in affluent enclaves. Households linked to municipal systems get the cheapest water. The poor plod through intermediaries, from tanker operators to vendors, to buy murky water in cans. "Every step they are forced to take away from the water source adds to the price."

Water ensures human waste disposal. It is "one of the strongest determinants of child survival around the world. Improving sanitation—advancing from open defecation to pit latrines, then flush toilets—reduces overall child mortality. Egypt slashed death rates by almost 57 percent through toilets in homes.

"'No access to sanitation' is a polite way of saying that people draw water for drinking, cooking and washing from rivers, lakes and drains fouled with excrement," the report adds. "In slums outside Nairobi, people defecate in plastic bags and throw them into the street because they have no other option."

In San Carlos University's demographic study "Cebu," the late Fr. Wilhelm Flieger, SVD noted the same "wrap and throw" practice here. "The proportion of households in the province with no toilet facility whatsoever was more than twice as large in 1990, as the national proportion .... Toilets will have to be created or upgraded in one-fifth of all Cebu households."

"Sanitation is entirely absent from political campaigns and public debate. The realities of open defecation are relegated to backroom politics, and as a result, progress has been glacial. Stigma is one of the greatest obstacles" and results in a hush-hush problem, the UNDP study observes.

Governments must put water at the center of poverty reduction policies and budget planning, the report adds. There is need to set clear goals—and hold providers to account: Rethinking and redesigning water tariffs and subsidies can spur investments. And the rural sector deserves priority. "We need a new model of water management for the 21st century," Watkins insists. "For starters, we must stop using water like there's no tomorrow—and that means using it more efficiently at levels that do not destroy our environment."

"'Not having access to clean water' is a euphemism for profound deprivation," HDR 2006 points out. "The crisis in water and sanitation is—above all—a crisis for the poor."

* * *

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Triumph

THERE'S THE RUB

Conrado de Quiros

THE TRIUMPH FOR SOVEREIGNTY IS PATENT.

People have called Judge Benjamin Pozon's verdict finding Lance Cpl. Daniel Smith guilty of rape historic, and it is. Some of you are probably too young to remember it, but there was a time when we were completely powerless to do something about the abuses of American servicemen in this country.

That was the heyday of the US bases in Clark and Subic, when Philippine governments were willing to look the other way each time American soldiers raped Filipino women or shot Filipino kids to death—the latter immortalized by Nora Aunor in "Minsan May Isang Gamu-Gamo" with the words, "*Hindi baboy ang kapatid ko!*"—for many reasons. Not the least of them being US aid and the more direct "aid" offered by the likes of "Gapo" to the countless prostitutes and musicians who flocked there.

The offenders were never brought to trial, they were spirited away in the glare of day (never mind in the dead of night), never to be heard of again. We don't even know if they weren't given medals in lieu of discharge for discharging themselves manfully, or showing exceptional courage amid the threat of venereal disease.

No American serviceman has yet been convicted of any serious crime in this country, let alone sentenced to 40 years in a local jail. I don't know which is worse, the 40 years or the local jail. They have been pretty much free to pursue R and R by their own definition of it, constrained only by their consciences, which have been dulled by the very nature of their training and the guilt-cleansing agent called "anti-terrorism," and the threat of having their knuckles rapped since bad behavior, such as rape, raises all sorts of questions about what anti-terrorism is and who it is meant to be anti.

You look at it from that perspective, and you truly appreciate the historicity of Pozon's ruling. Indeed, you look at it from the perspective of this government's own efforts to repeat the past, and you truly appreciate the depth of Pozon's courage. Frankly, I didn't expect the outcome to be like this. Ignacio Bunye says the ruling is "a triumph of impartial justice." Well, the government he serves may not take credit for it. If it happened, it happened not because of but in spite of this government. Pozon's ruling unleashes a veritable sea change in Philippine-American relations.

In one fell swoop, it redefines "special relations," a term that has taken on garish connotations, "special," in particular, meaning special treatment, if not special *siopao*. Before this, I had thought we were worse off than Okinawa. There, at least public protest compelled the local government to run after American servicemen accused of raping high school girls in particular, which was threatening to become an epidemic from official indifference, if not blindness. Pozon's ruling sets things on a more even keel. Or at least it cranks up the rusty engine that could go there.

But more than a triumph for sovereignty, Pozon's ruling is a triumph of justice.

That ultimately is what this is all about. This is not about "special relations," this is not about women empowerment, this is not about people marching and governments hedging, however those things loom large in the background. It is about right and wrong. It is about righting wrongs. It is about giving justice to the aggrieved.

I must confess, too that as the trial wore on, I didn't know the truth anymore. My only concern was that the process was carried out fair and square, which was something the newspeak justice secretary seemed determined to impair. I don't know what kind of pressure was put on Pozon by all the interested parties in this case. I don't know what kind of pressure he personally felt, real or imagined. But his ruling indicates that whatever weight was put on him or he personally felt, he fought it off magnificently.

His ruling is well thought out. It is at least well-reasoned. Pozon rattles off the points that damn Smith—if not to hell, at least to 40 years of local jail, and again I don't know which is worse. Smith admitted to having sex with Nicole. Nicole was in no condition to have consensual sex given that she was right out of her mind from drink. Nicole struggled and resisted. The medical findings showed her to have suffered injuries consistent with forcible sex. There is no (reasonable) doubt about it: Smith raped "Nicole."

Of course, Pozon's ruling hasn't pleased everybody, not those who wanted all of the accused freed, and not those who wanted all of them jailed. Speculation is rife that Smith, the youngest and lowest-ranking of the accused, might have been the victim of an initiation rite. Which seems to jibe with the original statement of the driver that Smith was egged on by his fellows with cries of "F—k! F—k! F—k!" But that wasn't proven by the prosecution. Smith in any case deserves little sympathy: His fellows might have done him a disservice, but he did another human being an utter wrong. The real tragedy has not befallen him, it has befallen "Nicole."

I'll take Pozon's judgment for what it is, and commend him from the bottom of my heart. I don't know that Time Magazine would have cited him as one of Asia's heroes—what he did would seem par for the course elsewhere. But for us, well, like the Supreme Court decisions thwarting iniquity, which would also be par for the course elsewhere, it is heroic in the extreme. We've another hero to look up to in these days when heroism seems to have become rarer than a traffic cop in rain. While at this, the courts seem to be on a roll. They've become the last bastion of courage in a time of cowardice. They've become the last vestige of sanity in a time of madness.

Pozon for one has just shown there's still justice in this world. May his tribe increase.

Fe del Mundo: legend and icon

POLITICAL TIDBITS

Belinda Olivares-Cunanan

EL SHADDAI LEADER MIKE VELARDE WAS REported to have said that the House of Representatives should not push Charter change now "because they are suspect already. Why are they afraid of the election?"

Velarde should realize, however, that various parties have motives and agenda. The House is pushing for Charter change for a number of reasons: to advance reforms that could move the country forward; to be able to stay in office longer, etc. There must be as many reasons as there are House members. But the senators have from the beginning resisted Charter change for their own reasons. They don't want their chamber abolished and for them, the issue is survival. Some of them want to become president. Again, there are as many reasons for objecting as there are senators.

But a parliamentary/unicameral system can only be an improvement on our current presidential/bicameral system which is characterized by constant gridlock and a very slow response in the competitive age we live in.

Critics of Charter change cite various surveys purportedly showing that more Filipinos are against it. But the same critics have done everything to block Cha-cha. The best way to find out how people feel about it is to submit it to a plebiscite.

Assuming Cha-cha is passed by the House this week, a plebiscite could be held in February. During the 60-day campaign period, both the pros and antis would expectedly move heaven and earth to win the people to their respective side. That final judgment by the people has to be accepted by both sides, but the antis seem to be afraid to submit to this.

* * *

While I have publicly disagreed on issues with Dagupan Archbishop Oscar Cruz, this time I fully agree with his statement on the "Nicole" rape case. His message was echoed by New Bilibid Prisons Director Vicente Vinarao on TV. Essentially, they're saying that women have to be very careful about the way they behave. As Cruz put it, "[Women] should not make themselves appear cheap and practically inviting to be violated by men." Vinarao, on the other hand, said women have to be careful. Among the lessons to be learned from that episode is that we women ought to avoid situations and habits we cannot handle. After a long night of heavy drinking, during which the group, including Nicole, had become very intoxicated, it's easy to see how the young Marine could get carried away by his baser instincts. Nicole admits she was deserted by her friend and sister and that a girl "should never trust strangers." Hard-earned gems of wisdom all our *kabaro* should take to heart.

* * *

Last week, relatives, colleagues and disciples of Dr. Fe del Mundo gathered in Manila Hotel to honor this icon and legend in Philippine pediatric medicine on the occasion of her 95th birthday. Dressed in an aqua-blue gown, the multi-awarded lady sat in a wheelchair and enjoyed all the accolades. One of those who paid tribute was her niece, Elisa del Mundo-Bengzon, wife of Transportation Undersecretary Agustin R. Bengzon. Elisa, my schoolmate in the old Holy Ghost College and a summa cum laude graduate in business administration, noted that the seed of greatness was planted in Fe del Mundo's heart when she decided to take the place of her sister, who had died even before she could take up the course she wanted, medicine.

Del Mundo is best known for her pioneering work in pediatrics, much of it in the children's hospital in Quezon City that bears her name. But few probably know that she has the distinction of being the first female student—and the first Filipina—to enter Harvard Medical School. Elisa Bengzon said her aunt could have pursued her medical career in the United States, but she chose to serve her people, as well as American and British children during the Japanese occupation of Manila. US Navy Adm. Chester W. Nimitz, the Pacific Fleet commander in World War II, wrote in the foreword of a tribute to her that "she began her medical career with an endowment of ability which made it obvious that she could be one of the very famous physicians of her generation." But Nimitz said she was not just a famous physician, but "a great physician." As Bengzon noted, Fe del Mundo's father, in choosing her name, which means "Faith of the World," was being prophetic: her life work in RP medicine was built "on a strong foundation of faith in God and love of humanity."

* * *

Bengzon quoted the Medical Observer's beautiful tribute to Del Mundo: "It is not for the functions of the mind and hand that we honor you. We honor you for what is inside you that we see in all that you have done—the function of your heart, because you firmly believe that more than a keen eye, a sharp mind and a skillful hand, a physician needs a compassionate heart." The Observer described her as "a woman of superior intellect and many 'firsts': a trail-blazer, pioneer, public servant, educator, author, scientist, researcher, humanitarian, recipient of national and international awards, an inspiring paradigm, a shining and living example, a universal model for all pediatricians and physicians."

***Mabuhay ka*, Dr. Fe del Mundo!**

* * *

Erda Foundation, founded in 1974 by the venerable Fr. Pierre Tritz, S.J., yearly supports about 30,000 children from poor families in the pre-school, primary and secondary levels across the nation, thus preventing them from becoming dropout statistics. It's in bad need of even second-hand computers to do its work, and perhaps banks and other private corporations can help. Progress in technology creates obsolescence, and current high-end computers operating in 32-bit processors will be rendered obsolete with the introduction of the 64-bit processors in the first quarter of 2007. Erda will be very grateful to receive donations from those who are replacing their computer servers. Please call Fr. Tritz at Erda Foundation, Tel. Nos. 712-4418 and 732-3198.

'Puta man o santa man'

HUMAN FACE

Ma. Ceres P. Doyo

> *Man's discovery that his genitalia could serve as a weapon to generate fear must rank as one of the most important discoveries of prehistoric times. From the prehistoric times to the present, rape has played a critical function. It is a conscious process of intimidation by which all men keep all women in a state of fear.*
>
> —Susan Brownmiller, "Against Our Will"

I USED THE ABOVE QUOTE LAST YEAR SHORTly after the rape of "Nicole" landed in the news and created a furor. I use it again now that a conviction has been made.

Puta man o santa man, whore or saint—neither one deserves to be raped. This has been playing in my head for days, before and after the decision on the Subic rape case and until now. At first I thought saying it in Filipino would sound too vulgar, but I changed my mind when I read yesterday's front-page news in the INQUIRER.

No less than a bishop—Bishop Oscar Cruz—was lecturing women on how not to get raped, as if there was a way to get raped. As if rape could partly be women's fault, as if they would have it coming and could bring it upon themselves because of their way of dressing or behaving. Because it is but natural for men to respond by raping? Come on. Hello? I could feel blood rising to my face.

I'm glad the INQUIRER gave the quote prominence because it showed how many men, a bishop among them, still regard women, that is, as temptresses. "Womanhood is precious and noble, so it is not right for them to be flaunting it around." That's what the bishop said. Flaunt? Otherwise they could be raped? Should women be always fearful that the way they carry their womanhood could result in violence against their person?

Not that I approve of everything that women do with their bodies and of their distracting way of dressing on certain occasions. But I don't wish that the celebrities who have three-fourths of their quivering mammary blobs exposed would be raped, mashed or groped. Sure, certain behaviors could have negative consequences. Like if you sit on a ledge of a building you could fall, but this does not mean someone should push you to your death.

Rape is no longer a "private crime." The Anti-Rape Law of 1997 classifies rape as "a crime against persons." For a long time rape was considered merely as "a crime against chastity." This seemed to suggest that persons who were unchaste were fair game.

Defense lawyers who dredge up the sexual reputation of rape victims and cast aspersions on their morality to bolster their defense of the accused should know this strategy could boomerang on them.

Last year, when the INQUIRER carried the banner headline that Nicole was not, repeat, not, a sex worker, women's groups reacted strongly because the headline seemed to suggest that if Nicole was in fact one, she was fair game. (The headline was a response to those who wondered what she was.)

The crime of rape should have nothing to do with the chastity of the victim. Rape is not merely a sexual offense or a crime against chastity but a crime against persons and against the State. As one feminist lawyer had said, "Rape is not a crime against the hymen. It is a crime against the whole person." It is a crime of the strong against the weak, a crime of conquest.

Speaking of conquest, the Subic rape case took on a political color because the accused were citizens of a former colonizing nation that still throws its weight around.

Did you see that burly American who was throwing his weight around to shelter Lance Cpl. Daniel Smith after his conviction? But our policemen were there to do their job. He even tried to stop the media from following in a car. I wish someone had yelled at him, "You, (@#&!*>) American, you are on Philippine soil!" I wish our police had pinned him down but they seemed intimidated. *Dinaan sa laki*.

Smith did not deny he had sex with Nicole, but it was consensual, he insisted. Well, that's what rapists always say—that their victims wanted it and so why are they crying rape? That's what 91-year-old American Jesuit Fr. James Reuter, a revered figure in these islands, is stressing again and again. That it was consensual sex as Smith alleged. This makes Nicole a liar. Had he talked to Nicole?

I find Reuter's interventions so pathetic. The most he could have done was simply to listen to what Smith had to confess (whether or not Smith is a Catholic) and give it the seal of confession. In contrast, the Filipino Protestant pastor who had been regularly ministering to Smith and the other accused simply stuck to the spiritual and left the legal to the lawyers and the judge.

The other night, there was this news on TV about a big box that was dumped beside the road. When a poor man opened it, he found a whole human body inside it. That's what the US servicemen did to Nicole. They dumped her on the pavement, with her pants worn the wrong way and with a used condom hanging somewhere. Is that how consensual sex is supposed to end? And then they zoomed off to their waiting ship like felons fleeing the scene of a crime.

What woman in her proper mind (Nicole was drunk) would consent to be carried out of a club on the back of a man and into a van, and in the presence of five or six other men, have sex with one of them while the vehicle was moving? And when it was over, be dumped on the side of the road, looking disheveled and dazed?

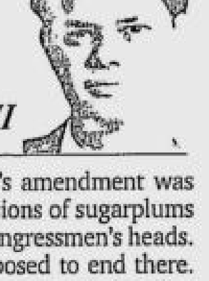
Last year, Sen. Francis Pangilinan said that 3,000 rape cases against Americans have been dismissed in the Olongapo City court. Smith's conviction in Makati is a first.

Congratulations to Nicole's lawyers.

* * *

Send feedback to cerespd@info.com.ph

Nocturnal deliberations



THE LONG VIEW

Manuel L. Quezon III

NECESSITY IS THE MOTHER OF INVENTION and never did this old chestnut prove more true than in the House of Representatives Tuesday night. Newsbreak Online reported that after encountering difficulties in mustering a quorum, the House leadership decided to show congressmen the hoochie coochie. Wrote Miriam Grace A. Go and Tita C. Valderama: "On Monday evening, word got around that Pampanga Rep. Juan Miguel 'Mikey' Arroyo, son of the President, was inviting administration solons to go to the Palace's legislative liaison office in the Batasan. His partymate ... Luis Villafuerte told reporters that food was prepared for congressmen in that room. There was no food, but there were reportedly SAROs (special allotment release orders) and NCAs (notices of cash allocation) being distributed to congressmen. These are documents confirming the availability of their pork barrel funds. These were supposedly their reward for today's vote."

Now of course, as good citizens, you and I should be shocked that anyone would dare to report that bribery takes place in the House. Perish the thought! Our First Family teaches us that what we see isn't necessarily what exists. When the President's husband staggered out of St. Luke's hospital, profusely mopping his brow, he gallantly told the media, "I feel like an athlete!" Now if this political babushka insists he's Nadia Comaneci, who are we to argue?

Not Newsbreak, which dutifully reported, too, that "An administration congressman denies the reported flow of money."

It's the Bart Simpson defense: "Ididn'tdoitnobodysawmedoityoucan'tproveanything!" Except that the report went on to say: "The source says Malacañang indeed released some money to distribute to the congressmen, but De Venecia has been withholding it until after they've voted favorably on the move to amend House Rule 15." The thrifty Speaker, it seems, is insistent that he gets the maximum bang for the buck.

Which means that if Tuesday saw a partial fulfillment of this mission—the rule's amendment was accomplished by 9:30 p.m.—visions of sugarplums wouldn't be dancing in many congressmen's heads. Not yet. You see, it wasn't supposed to end there. While Section 150 of Rule 15 was amended so that resolutions don't have to go through the same wringer that bills do, the House was supposed to adopt a resolution by Wednesday morning. Two things got in the way. The first was Rep. Gerry Salapuddin's clumsy—and in the end, self-defeating—handling of the session (which made Sen. Francis Pangilinan's maladroit handling of the 2004 presidential canvass look brilliant in retrospect).

The second was Rep. Constantino Jaraula's attempt to pull a switcheroo by trying to give a sponsorship speech for what turned out to be the wrong resolution. It was like watching a feebleminded soldier throw the firing pin instead of the grenade at the enemy. Jaraula detonated, splattering his colleagues with the ground round that was all that was left of the leadership's plans. Speaker Jose de Venecia had to send everyone home so they could pick up the pieces. But now that they've put Jaraula together again, what's next?

Making up your own mind is what's next, even as the House majority tries to make up what passes for its collective mind. It's too bad the nation was sleeping Tuesday night, because anyone who cared to watch got a useful glimpse of our future under a parliamentary government.

It took three tries to muster a quorum, that is, getting representatives to actually show up for work. Enticements became necessary to get that quorum: inviting everyone to a buffet which turned out not to involve food but promises of cash. Chances that an enthusiastic majority will end up shouting approval for a motion that means exactly the opposite of what was approved 100 percent—as demonstrated by Salapuddin stampeding the House into bellowing approval for the opposition's proposal to postpone the effectivity of the majority-amended rule, until 15 days had passed and the amended rule could be published in the papers. The likelihood that a new parliament will overwhelmingly OK something it didn't intend, and also dispense with every rule meant to prevent such foolishness, is also 100 percent. These are the blessings of a large majority operating in a single-chamber atmosphere: the happiness of lemmings diving off a cliff.

Another old chestnut is that haste makes waste, but the House thinks that's OK, because your present-day congressman will be a new, improved member of parliament. Raul Gonzalez can be both minister of justice and MP for the district now underwhelmingly represented by his son; and really, why endure a Lito Lapid or Bong Revilla when the House majority can match them? And be more amusing, to boot: there was that Quezon City congresswoman who confused the Speaker with a TV set, calling him "JVC" (a Freudian slip, perhaps, considering the legislative liason's promissory note buffet) while bragging she gave the Catholic Church P4 million.

What the House is doing to its rules will never be tolerated in any self-respecting organization. But a self-respecting House is an oxymoron. I remember Palace pekingese Alex Magno asking, "As the world rushes aid to the victims of the Leyte landslide, why are the political players of Manila more engrossed with power grabs?" Magno should point to Carlos Imperial, Joey Salceda and Luis Villafuerte—and ask Edcel Lagman in particular, who loftily told Ricky Carandang that a parliament would lead to greater accountability and responsibility—"Et tu, Brute?" For what are we seeing but a power grab? As Willy Prilles Jr. observed from Naga City, "If there is one Philippine institution today that 'Reming' should have destroyed, it has to be the House of Representatives."

Does it take a man to complete a woman?

YOUNG BLOOD

Shiveena Parmanand

We want to know what the young are thinking about. What are their thoughts on current issues? We welcome contributions from the twentysomething and below.—Ed.

"SHIVS, WOMEN TODAY HAVE ONLY TWO OPTIONS: they can either get married or become hags," one of my teachers very smugly informed me a few months ago. I'm not sure if he was being serious or he was being sarcastic, but his words continue to haunt me to this day.

There are so many confident and accomplished women in my school and community—all but one of our school paper's editorial board are females, the main officers of our student council are females—and all around the world, women are climbing up the social, economic and political ladders. Even our President is female (OK, not a brilliant example right now). So it was just disheartening to have it flung at me so carelessly that society continues to think that women's achievements pale in comparison with their marital status.

Thankfully (or maybe not, since it sweeps the issue under the rug), we have become too politically correct to say things like that in a formal classroom setting. But looking back, I realize that I shouldn't have been so shocked to hear that remark. My teacher's way of thinking is neither new nor uncommon. That idea is heard everywhere from online dating ads to the advice columns where lovelorn women bemoan their fate and even schools, apparently!

My generation of females faces an incredibly difficult challenge. On one hand, there are more opportunities available to us so that we are able to see what the world has to offer us and more importantly what we have to offer it. On the other hand, we are still being held back. People who are in positions of authority continue to impress upon us the absolute importance of marriage. Brilliance and ambition are not enough for a woman to be considered a success, not if she's going to remain unmarried. She has to have a man to complete her, to support her and protect her.

While filling out my college application forms, I have to skip about a decade ahead into my future and formulate the standards by which I will judge myself. As I attempt to come up with a list of women I consider successful, I ask myself how large a role their marital status played in their careers. Right now, my goals go far beyond marriage. Does that mean that I am destined to become an ugly, old woman (Merriam-Webster's Dictionary's definition of a "hag") because my goals are more career-oriented and individualistic? Do I have to re-evaluate the things I want to do and make sure that marriage takes precedence over everything else, lest, God forbid, I waste my youth trying to find myself and in the process fail to find a husband and end up being a hag?

I cannot understand why we continue to think that marriage is the only way to happiness and completion, what with all the stories we hear about marital infidelity, domestic abuse, marital rape and even murder. How much longer are we going to pretend that these things do not happen at all, cannot happen to us, or were deserved by the victims? How much longer will our so-called authority figures tell little girls that unless they are married they will end up being old, ugly women?

Shiveena Parmanand, 16, is a student at the Ateneo de Zamboanga University High School.

Behold the new Blood

CELEBRATE THE CONTINUING EVOLUTION OF A GENERATION as INQUIRER Books and Anvil Publishing launch the third volume in the best-selling Youngblood series. Edited by Jorge V. Aruta and Ruel S. De Vera, "Youngblood3" gathers 53 selected pieces appearing in this space from 1999 to 2004. The book will be launched at 4 p.m. on Dec. 9, Saturday at PowerBooks Live! In Greenbelt 4, Makati City. The following contributors are invited to attend and receive their copies of the book:

Jules Alcantara
Rain Reyes
Jose Leo Lemuel G. Caparas Jr.
Cinnamon Marcelo
Rodeny L. Barayuga
Rio Cobcobo
Prairie Dawn
Ron Darvin
Agnes Fidelis C. Gloria-Pinzon
Elaine P. Lim
Purple
Anne Aberin
Squire
Alex Avila
Fitz Gerald Villafuerte
Windi Remmi Mondiguing Tapawan
Pearlsha Abubakar
Biagko
Lou Albano
Angelo Hernandez
Claudette M. Llarena
Connie Gundayao
Maria del Rosario
Karen Mae V. Gican
B
Jerick T. Aguilar
Malou I. Redome
Jen Esguerra
Erin Batac
Ella Reyes
Eder S. Mutuc, M.D.
Donalyne Rasalan Lampa
Carlos Alfonso Q. Santos
Christela Cabreros
Adelfo Cyrus Alanis
Aleja F. Martinez
Zvach
Matthias
Raiza Katrina Abubakar
Jessica Brillantes
Gabriella S. Martelino
Sherie S. Sta. Cruz
Janie S. Cambri
Jonas Soltes
Jael Wenceslao
Paolo L. Azurin
Diana Emlano
Kay Stephanie Veloso
TJ
Dawn Isobel Yu Aquino
Roel A. Andag
Paolo David
Florianne Jimenez

Real tragedies of the year

JULIE ALBIOR AND FLORES BIwang, both from Bohol province, were the topnotchers in the high school category of the National Achievement Test (NAT)—with an identical 100 percent score—in mathematics. Coming from poor families, the two bright students failed to enter .college last semester.

Biwang passed the UP entrance examination and was supposed to take up engineering, but she couldn't afford the tuition rate of the university. After hearing this news, President Macapagal-Arroyo met with the students in Malacañang and instructed the Commission on Higher Education to give them scholarships.

Albior and Biwang represent the millions of poor but intelligent students who are forced to skip schooling because of the rising cost of education and decreasing family incomes. They are poignant examples showing how the government has abandoned the youth and takes education lightly.

The scholarship grant is a maneuver to conceal the failure of the government's, particularly of the CHED's, student assistance programs. It is also an insult to other out of school youth. Does one have to be a NAT topnotcher in order to receive much-needed government subsidy? Since 2001, the government has been reducing the subsidies for public universities. This forced the schools either to accept fewer students or to raise fees.

In 2004, the CHED implemented a new tuition guideline which allowed private schools to impose higher fees (below the inflation rate) without consulting the students.

Months before the 2004 elections, the school loan program SAFE for SR (Student Assistance Fund for Education and Strong Republic) of the government targeted only the students who were of voting age. The present scholarship program E-FAST (Emergency Financial Assistance for Students) prioritizes students from bailiwicks of government allies.

We also have another bad news for Albior and Biwang: If they want to enroll in UP next year, they have to prepare for higher fees. The UP administration wants to increase the university's tuition fees by 300 percent.

The disheartening stories of students forced by poverty to drop out of school remind us of the futility of government education programs. It also underscores the need to curb corruption in the government and the "misprioritization" of the national budget.

We thought the classroom shortage fiasco last June and the recent nursing scandal were the best indicators of the crisis in education. We were wrong. Albior, Biwang and the rest of the underprivileged bright students of the land are the real tragedies of the year.

—RAYMOND PALATINO,
president, Kabataan Party,
mongpalatino@gmail.com

Clueless and incompetent secretary

OUR EXPERIENCE AS OBSERVERS in a recently concluded budget hearing at the Senate was a lesson on why patronage politics and political expediency will never help in promoting good governance. Budget Secretary Rolando Andaya must be having a hard time sleeping these days.

During his presentation of the Department of Budget and Management's proposed 2007 national budget at the Senate last Nov. 13, 2007, a demystified Andaya was exposed for what he really is: a clueless politician, appointed to oversee and manage the people's resources not because of his experience and expertise concerning fiscal matters but for the Arroyo administration's political expediency.

Questions about the reported "over-appropriation" for the Department of Education's School Feeding Program in 2006 had Andaya kicking himself in the teeth. The specific appropriation for the program was only P13 million, but DBM records show that P1.4 billion was released for it. Desperate for answers, Andaya pointed out that the additional allotments came from DepEd funds and from the 2006 supplemental budget.

However, when pressed by the senators as to what specific DepEd programs were prejudiced because of the realignment of budget for the school-feeding program, Andaya was at a loss for words. Thus, he unmasked his ignorance about the specific aspects of budgeting.

Sen. Franklin Drilon had to lecture him that it was wrong to assume that some of the additional funds for the school-feeding program came from the 2006 supplemental budget, which limits the reallocation of funds for the feeding program for milk and meals, not for the controversial GMA (Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo) rice. Not to mention the fact that by increasing the allocation for the program, he infringed on the power of Congress as the branch that has the sole control of the purse.

We cannot help but feel sorry for the DBM staff helping Andaya come up with the right answers. For all of their preparedness and adeptness, their boss is clearly lacking in both.

Truly, as young people, it is disheartening to see in the flesh what kind of leaders we have. Leaders who rose to the echelons of power not because of their competence and genuine commitment to serve but due to loyal partisanship to an insecure President.

No wonder our annual budget plan is in such a mess. No wonder things are not shaping up in Ms Arroyo's "Strong Republic." The role of the government to provide adequate social services, by having a sound and pro-people budget plan, has clearly taken the backseat in favor of "string-pulling" and patronage politics. The DBM is, without doubt, a victim of rotten politics.

—WILSON REQUEZ,
Youth Against the Debt,
scap.national@gmail.com

'Noli,' 'Fili' books in National Library

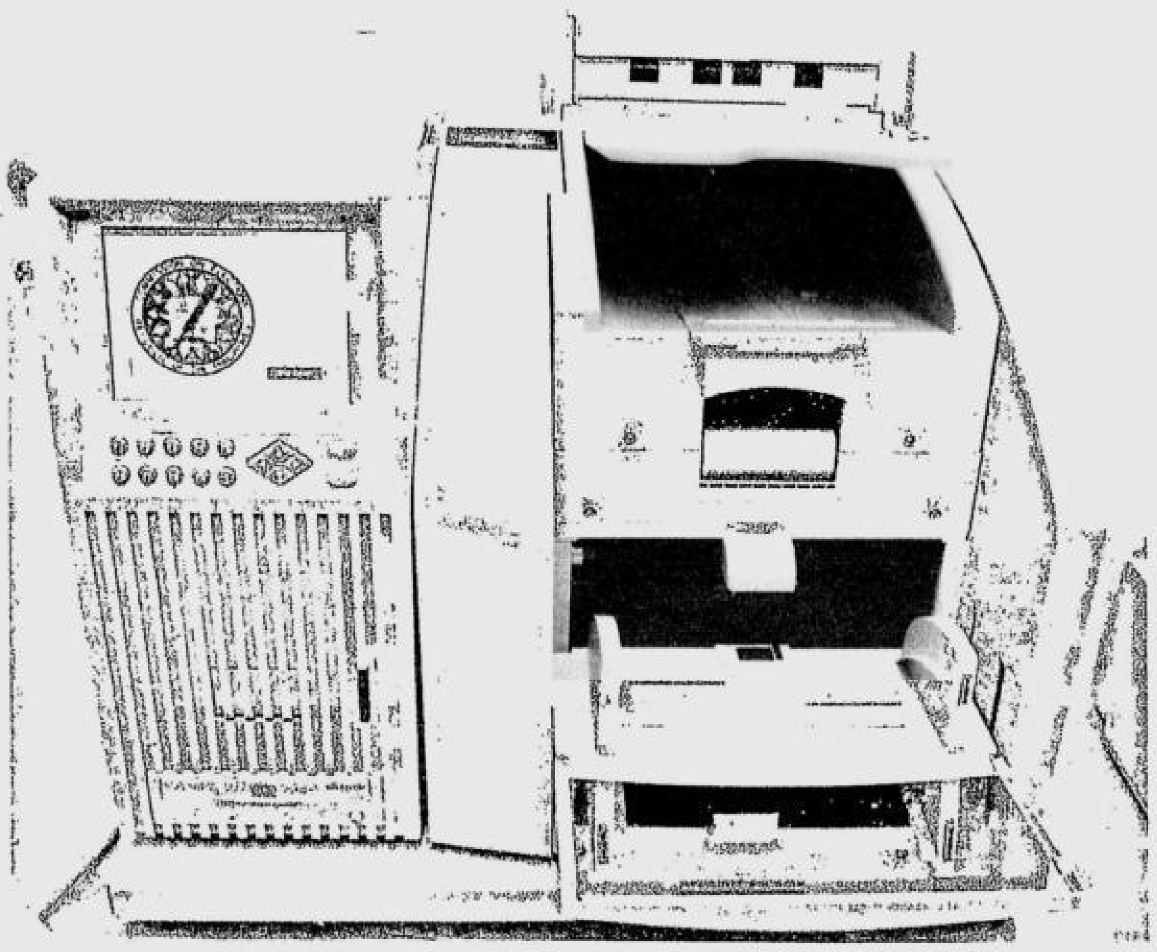
IN CONNECTION WITH THE news item "Home at last for rare 'Noli,' 'Fili'" (PDI, 11/28/06), the National Library would like to make known to the public that it has in its vault the original manuscripts of Dr. Jose Rizal's "Noli Me Tangere" and "El Filibusterismo" (in his own handwriting) as well as copies of their first edition, specifically in the Rarebooks Section of the Filipiniana Division.

The National Library's 1886-printed copies of "Noli Me Tangere" came from the American Circulating Library (ACL) of Manila, which was established in 1900 by the American Circulating Library Association composed of wives of US military servicemen in the Philippines. In 1901, ACL transferred all its collections to the Philippine Insular Government and eventually to the National Library.

The National Library's 1891-printed copies of "El Filibusterismo" came as part of the Tabacalera Collections of the Bibliotica de Compania General de Tabacos de Filipinas through Act No. 2223 in 1913.

The National Library's printed copies of these rare books are available to our library users. Digital copies are also accessible through our website, Philippine eLib.

—PRUDENCIANA C. CRUZ,
director 4, The National Library,
PO Box 2926, TM Kalaw Street,
Ermita 1000, Manila



A VOTING machine: beyond manipulation?

PDI PHOTO

Take a harder look at automated elections

WHILE I AM FOR THE AUTOMATION of elections, I have some reservations about it, especially because of some reports that cast doubt on its reliability. We should take a harder look not at the proposed automation law but at the voting machines to be used.

A study has found out that the voting machine is vulnerable to fraud because it lacks the audit mechanism or paper trail with which to verify election results other than what the machine itself reports. It is therefore open to errors and sabotage.

Even the computer experts at the National Institute of Standard Technology in the United States have said that "paperless voting machines—essentially computers programmed to display ballot images and record voter choices in practical term cannot be made secure."

If we may recall, a Filipino computer student was once involved in a major "hacking" incident that caused worldwide furor. For this alone, there is reason to believe that the elections could be manipulated not necessarily to favor certain candidates but simply to sabotage the democratic process of electing our leaders.

—JOE SEGUERRA,
arreuges@yahoo.com

Announcement of winners right after lotto draw not doable

THIS IS IN REPLY TO THE letter of Tet Gambito. (PDI, 12/3/06) He questions why the announcement of the lotto jackpot winner is not done "right after the draw."

For the information of the public, and most especially the lotto players, it takes time to download the millions of bets placed on every lotto draw. How we in the Philippine Charity Sweepstakes Office wish that a system had been invented to satisfy Gambito's desire.

The lotto's Main Computer System is not made in the Philippines. It is the same lotto system used worldwide. The "delay" in the announcement of lotto winners that we go through in the Philippines is similarly experienced in all the other countries, because that's how the system works. The time is consumed only in the print-out of bets placed nationwide, and not for any other reason.

Gambito must take into consideration that it's not only the jackpot winner that the system unloads but all the thousands and thousands of winning combinations for the second, third and fourth prizes. That takes time to download.

At present, it takes about 20 minutes after the draw to tabulate all the winners of the lotto jackpot and minor prizes; and to determine where the winning tickets were bought. The system is able to do that for the information of the public.

Much as we in the PCSO would like to accommodate Gambito's suggestion, his recommendation is simply not logical and not doable. If Gambito doubts what I am saying—that the lotto system is tamper-proof for no human intervention can possibly enter it for it will automatically reject any manipulation, he can give it a try. He can tap all the computer experts in the world, and we in the PCSO will give all the jackpot prizes to whoever can manipulate our system. No kidding.

If Gambito continues to entertain his doubts after this explanation, I have one advice for him: Don't bet! We don't force anyone to play the lotto.

—MANUEL L. MORATO,
director, Philippine Charity
Sweepstakes Office,
Quezon Institute Compound,
E. Rodriguez Ave., Quezon City

IF you have any complaints, grievances or suggestions about the treatment of news and photos by the Inquirer, you may write to the Readers' Advocate, Philippine Daily Inquirer, Chino Roces Avenue, corner Yague and Mascardo Streets, City of Makati or send a fax to Nos. 897-4793, 897-4794, or e-mail readersadvocate@ inquirer.com.ph

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PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

TV GUIDE

Thursday, December 7, 2006

IKAW ANG PIPILI NG 1ST PHILIPPINE IDOL!
JAN
MAU
GIAN
ABC
Iba Tayo!
Philippine Idol
DECEMBER 9 & 10, SATURDAY & SUNDAY 9PM

ClickTheCity.com

Channel	2:30PM	3:00PM	3:30PM	4:00PM	4:30PM	5:00PM	5:30PM	6:00PM	6:30PM	7:00PM	7:30PM	8:00PM	8:30PM	9:00PM	9:30PM	10:00PM	10:30PM	11:00PM	11:30PM
ABC 5	Nickelodeon				TNA Wrestling		Metro		Big News	S.O.S		Hayop Na Hayop		Philippine Idol	Sentro	The Best Of Dokyu		Araw-Araw Premyo Sa Resibo	Lefty La Mas Fea
ABS-CBN 2	Kapamilya Cinema				Inocente De Ti	Yu-Gi-Oh GX	Beet The Vandel Buster	Pangako Sa 'Yo	TV Patrol World		Kapamilya Deal Or No Deal	Super Inggo (8:15 PM)		Maging Sino Ka Man	Pinoy Dream Academy	Crazy For You	Bandila	SOCO	Mirada De Mujer
AXN		CSI: Miami (Season 4)		CSI: Crime Scene Investigation (Season 6)		Ultimate Guinness World Records	Samsung Sports World	Ripley's Believe It or Not		Beastmaster (Season I)		Fear Factor (Season VI)		The Amazing Race Asia		Alias (Season V)		Lost (Season II)	
bTV	NBA Action	TV Shopping		NBA Raptors @ Cavaliers					Pac 10				NBA Live	NBA Fantasy Hoops	NBA Raptors @ Cavaliers				
Cartoon Network	My Little Pony	All New Popeye Show	Dexter's Laboratory	Tom & Jerry Show/ Ben 10	Baby Looney Tunes	Winx Club	Xiaolin Showdown	My GYM Partner's A Monkey	Foster's Home For Imaginary Friends	Mirmo De Pon	PokeMon: The Johto Journey/ Pokemon: Johto League Champs	The Justisers	Shaman King	Courage The Cowardly Dog	The Grim Adventures Of Billy & Mandy	The Simpsons	Aqua Teen Hunger Force	Gundam Seed	Shaman King
Cinema One		Halimaw Sa Banga				Mano Po 2								Magic Temple				Tigasin	
Cinemax		Escape From Alcatraz				A Cry In The Dark				Night Falls On Manhattan				Critters				Whispers In The Dark	
CNN		Business International		World News	World Sport	Larry King Live		Business International	World Sport	World News Asia		World News	World Sport	World News Asia	News Asia Global Challenges Inside Media [illegible] Traveller Global Office Global Challenges	Your World Today			
Crime/Suspense		Revelations		Law and Order Special Victims Unit + 24		Profiler		Investigative Reports		Law and Order		Law and Order Special Victims Unit + 24		Bones		Threshold		E-Ring	
Discovery Channel		Psychic Witness		Man Made Marvels		Speed Week		Deadliest Catch		Extreme Machines		One Step Beyond	Connect	Mythbusters		Man Made Marvels		Power Zone	
Disney Channel	Mr. Bean, The Animated Series	Totally Spies	Art Attack/Un[illegible] Bunny	Shuriken School	Lilo & Stitch	Martin Mystery	Totally Spies	Kim Possible	Mr. Bean, The Animated Series	That's So Raven	Wonderful World Of Disney			Monster Allergy	Shuriken School	Buzz on Maggie	Totally Spies	Wonderful World Of Disney	
ESPN		Champions League Extra				Cheerleading		UEFA Champions League 2006/07				Women's Pro Billiards '06		Sportscenter Asia	Atlantic Coast Conf: Holy Cross Vs Duke				Sportscenter Asia
ETC		American Dreams 2		Change of Heart	Elimidate	Blind Date	Fifth Wheel	Seinfeld	Ambush Makeover	The Tyra Banks Show		Will & Grace	Friends	Simple Life 4	Rated Ohl 6	Entertainment Tonight	The Insider	The Tonight Show With Jay Leno	
ETC 2nd Avenue		Starting Over		The Maury Povich Show		The Jerry Springer Show		Dr. Phil		NBC Nightly News	The Inside Edition	The Ellen (Degeneres) Show		Wheel Of Fortune	Jeopardy	Nanny 911		NBC Nightly News	The Inside Edition
Fox News		Hannity & Colmes		On The Record With Greta Van Susteren		The O'Reilly Factor		Your World With Neil Cavuto		Fox & Friends						Fox News Live			
GMA 7	Makita Ka Lang Muli	Now and Forever	Into The Sun		Dragonball Z	Ghost Fighter	Jewel In The Palace		24 Oras	Captain Barbell	Atlantika (7:45 PM)		Bakekang	A Rosy Life (9:15 PM)		Magpakailanman		Saksi	100% Pinoy
Hallmark Channel				Judging Amy		Just Cause		Mcleod's Daughters		Strong Medicine		Family Law		Spooks		Wire In The Blood		Regenesis	
HBO				A Separate Peace			A Very Married Christmas			The Road Warrior				Little Black Book				Michael Collins	
Hero TV	Megaman	Sunny Pig	Inuyasha III	Mirmo de Pon	Saiyuki Reload	Naruto	Monkey Turn	Gundam Seed Destiny	Full Metal Panic	Galaxy Angels	Voltes V Evolution	Inuyasha III	Mirmo de Pon	Astroboy	Three-Eyed One	Naruto	AmDriver	Megaman	Yu-Gi-Oh GX
IBC 13		EZ Shop				Home Shopping Network	IBC Express Balita	Pangarap Kong Jackpot		EBC Earth Files		Japan Video Topics/ Arnis		Travel Philippines	Japan Video Topics/ Arnis	EBC Earth Files	IBC News Tonite	Metroball Show	
JackTV		Smackdown				X-Men	The Batman	Experience		Mad TV		Just For Laughs	Scare Tactics	Distraction	Banzai	The Daily Show With Jon Stewart	Premium Blend	The Late Show David Letterman	
Lifestyle Network	Get Color	Wolfgang Puck	Inside Dish	Rachel Ray		Sensible Chic	At Home With	Barefoot Contessa	Everyday Italian	Martha		Look For Less	Good Finds	Rachel Ray		E! True Hollywood Story		Your Private Island	Genuine Article
MTV Philippines		Handpicked Kwan	VH1 All Access: Wacky Families		Punk'd	The Hills	MTV Hits			Get Spotted	Ultrasound Kwan	TRL		Punk'd	The Hills	Barrio 19	Sessions Kwan	VH1 All Access: Older Babes, Younger Guys	
MYX		Rock MYX	My MYX	Mellow MYX	Urban MYX	Take 5	MYX News	MYX Firsts	Star MYX	OPM MYX	Pop MYX	MYX Daily Top Ten		MYX Presents		MYX Bandarito	My MYX	MYX Backtrax	MYXlog
National Geographic		Nat'l Geographic Specials		Naked Science		Hollywood Science		Top 5		Nat'l Geographic Specials		WOW!		Megastructures		Naked Science		Hollywood Science	
NBN					Diyos Ko, Mahal Mo Ba Siya?	Teledyaryo W/ Ray Langit & Angelique Lazo		Tinig Ng Bayan		Equilibrium		Teledyaryo Final Edition		World Pool Championship					
Net 25	INC Chronicles (Filipino)	In Focus	Euromaxx	INC Chronicles (English)	INC Chronicles (Filipino)	Ang Tamang Daan		News Beat (Live)		OpenLine Live	Gabay Sa Kalusugan	INC Chronicles (English)	INC Chronicles (Filipino)	Ang Pagbubuyag		World Report	In Focus	DWTV Journal News	Euromaxx
Nickelodeon	Chalkzone	The Fairly Odd Parents	SpongeBob SquarePants	Naturally Sadie	Romeo	SpongeBob SquarePants	My Life As A Teenage Robot	Danny Phantom	The Adventures of Jimmy Neutron	The Fairly Odd Parents	Drake & Josh	Unfabulous	SpongeBob SquarePants	The Fairly Odd Parents	All That	Romeo	As Told By Ginger	My Dad The Rock Star	
PBO			Tunay Na Kaibigan, Walang Iwanan				Daddy Na Si Chito				My Pledge Of Love				Sanggano't Sanggago				Nananabik Sa Yong Pagbabalik
Qtv	Pawnshop No. 8	Samurai X	Hikaru No Go	The Prince Of Tennis	MMS (My Music Station)		Moms		Winter Sonata	Irene	Emperor Of The Sea	Takeshi's Castle	Family Zoo		News On Q	Women's Desk		Irene	Value Added Treasures
RPN 9	TV Shopping	Dee's Day		Roundtable Discussion	Mr. Fighting	RPN Aksyon Balita		Complete Savages	Jake In Progress	The 4400		Medium		Cold Case		Newswatch Now	P-Max	Kasangga Mo Ang Langit	Police Hour
SBN 21								Sony Music Video				Oras Ng Himala		Oras ng Katotohanan		Friends Again		Sony Music Video	
Solar Sports						Gillette World Sport	Rookie Manual			WPT Tour				Hoop Nation		Sportsdesk		Asian Games	
Star Movies		Mighty Aphrodite (3:15 PM)				Her Minor Thing (5:15 PM)				The World Is Not Enough				Baywatch: Hawaiian Wedding			Shattered Glass		
Star World		The Bold & The Beautiful		General Hospital		Desire: Table For Three		The Simpsons	Malcolm In The Middle	Star News Asia	Seinfeld	Hope & Faith	According To Jim	The Office	Two And A Half Men	The Drew Carey Show		Seinfeld	Hope & Faith
Studio 23								Blog	Pinoy Dream Academy	Wazzup Wazzup	Totally Outrageous	Two And A Half Men	Will & Grace	Grey's Anatomy		News Central	Oprah (10:45PM)		MYXlog
UnTV				KNC Show	Kakampi Mo Ang Batas		Kaka at Claire Kaagapay N'yo		Public Hearing	Make My Day		Ang Dating Daan (8:15 PM)							

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Text us your feedback: inquirer atn name/age/city/message to 2207 (Globe) or 283 (Smart) *Assistant Editor* **Tony Bergonia**

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Mid-Day **SUERTRES** Evening

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(All in exact order)

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Abuses continue in Ecija war on Reds, Church leaders reveal

By Christian V. Esguerra

WHAT'S THE PRICE OF THROWING ONE'S SYMpathy behind communist rebels—at least to be suspected of it?

In communist-influenced Nueva Ecija, a couple actually killed themselves if only to escape alleged further torture from their accuser, the military's 48th Infantry Battalion stationed in Barangay Conversion in Pantabangan town.

The supposed harassment was so grave that it forced Librado Gallardo and his wife Martina to orphan their nine children.

Such was the account of a Church-initiated fact-finding mission that looked into persisting complaints of military abuse in the province.

"Two of our active Church members committed suicide because they could no longer bear to face the series of intimidation and torture in the hands of the military," Bishop Solito Toquero, head of the United Methodist Church mission, said in a statement.

Toquero identified Gallardo as chair of the local church council. He did not say exactly how the Gallardo couple killed themselves or how they had been supposedly tortured by the military.

"Their nine children are now suffering the tragedy of losing their parents and becoming separated from one another as they are forcibly displaced (because) of continuing military threats," the bishop said.

The fact-finding mission went to the village last Nov. 8-10 following reports of "massive torture, intimidation, harassment, and grave threats by elements of the 48th Infantry Battalion against the poor peasant families," said Toquero.

He said some of the victims included members of the United Methodist Church.

The group released the results of its investigation the other day, which included accounts of "disciplinary measures" by the military.

It said some residents had been ordered to hit one another with paddles, while others were forced to shave their heads. Others were allegedly subjected to electric shock while children were "interrogated" on the whereabouts of family members suspected of supporting the New People's Army.

"We are deeply concerned that the people's economic activities have been greatly affected by the military presence in the barangay," the group said in the report.

The United Methodist Church demanded the pullout of the entire 48th IB from Barangay Conversion, and asked the Commission on Human Rights to investigate alleged abuses in the area.

It said the CHR investigation should go beyond the commanding officers of the 48th IB and cover their other superiors while determining the "accountability and civil liability of the State."

"I am very much concerned with (the) grave cases of human rights violation happening to the people of Barangay Conversion," Toquero said. "We deplore the use of military intimidation, threats, and torture that seek to destroy the dignity of people peacefully living in their own communities."

The revelations by the fact-finding group appeared to support the account to the INQUIRER of two Nueva Ecija residents about the alleged military abuses.

In a previous interview, the residents spoke of one incident when a government employee in his 30s had been forced to walk home naked for failing to show his "cedula" (resident certificate) at a military checkpoint.

The military had been requiring residents to show such certificates to prove that they were from specific communities in the province, the two residents said.

At least two other residents, including a barangay captain, were allegedly ordered to swallow their expired certificates.

Armed Forces chief bares new plan vs NPA rebels

ZAMBOANGA CITY—ARMED Forces chief Gen. Hermogenes Esperon Jr. said the military has designed a campaign plan aimed at eradicating the communist insurgency before President Macapagal-Arroyo's term ends in 2010.

"We have come up with another insurgency operation plan for the next three and half years and we expect then to have defeated the (insurgents)," he said during a recent visit to Jolo.

Esperon said the anti-insurgency campaign, dubbed "Oplan Kaunlaran," was carved out of the five-year plan "Bantay Laya," which he said has greatly reduced the New People's Army's strength from 12,000 in 2002 to 7,000 in 2006.

"This coming year, the operation will be intensified so that the threat to national security will be further reduced," Esperon told soldiers during the visit.

He said under the campaign, the military would not only try to defeat communism through combat operations but also through the implementation of development projects in areas where the rebels operate.

"The features of this operation include constructing more farm-to-market roads, small water projects and other infrastructure needed by the communities," Esperon said.

Akbayan Rep. Etta Rosales, in a separate interview, said the campaign plan would not address the root causes of the insurgency.

"We can only have development under peaceful conditions and if you are going to apply military approaches in resolving insurgency, that would mean more people dislocated, schools destroyed, a growing number of evacuees ...," said Rosales.

She said the insurgency could only be addressed through serious social reforms. *Julie Alipala, Inquirer Mindanao*

Batangas gov't exec suspended over time record

CALAMBA CITY—THE DEPUTY Ombudsman for Luzon has ordered the suspension of the executive assistant of embattled Batangas Vice Gov. Richard Recto for allegedly tampering with his daily time record (DTR) at the provincial capitol.

On Nov. 23, 2006, deputy Ombudsman Victor Fernandez meted a six-month preventive suspension against Phillip Piccio for dishonesty and misconduct.

Fernandez instructed the Department of Interior and Local Government to immediately implement the order.

Piccio is president of Parents Enabling Parents (PEP) Coalition who led the filing of criminal and civil suits against pre-need insurance firms for their failure to settle their financial liabilities to their plan holders.

The suspension stemmed from a complaint filed by Gov. Armando Sanchez three months ago.

Aside from Piccio, also named respondents in the case were Recto and another executive assistant, Joseph Picart.

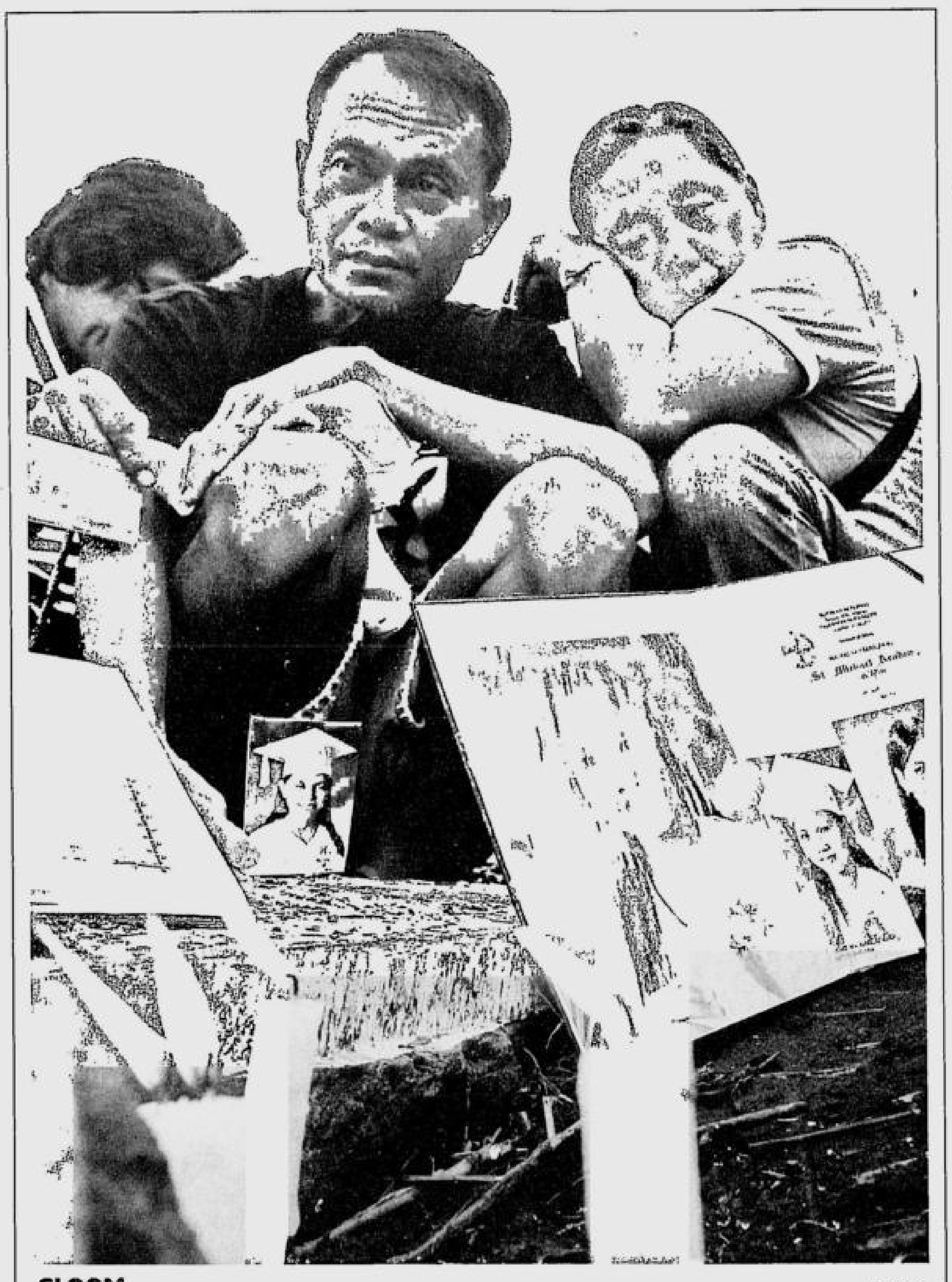
In his complaint, Sanchez said that while Piccio was filing cases against pre-need insurance firms and giving interviews with media, his DTR showed that "he reported for work and rendered full time service."

Fernandez, however, dropped the charges against the vice governor and Picart for lack of merit.

Fernandez's ruling was based on the recommendation of Joaquin Salazar, acting director of the evaluation and investigation office of the anti-graft agency.

In his investigation, Salazar discovered that while Piccio's DTR indicated that he was in the vice governor's office, he was actually in Manila filing cases against Pacific Plans Inc.

The INQUIRER tried to get the reaction of Recto and Piccio but they did not answer calls and text messages. *Marlon Ramos, Inquirer Southern Luzon*



GLOOM REUTERS

Parents and relatives of six students who are believed to be buried after their dormitory collapsed sit behind candles in Legazpi City, Albay, one of the areas worst hit by Supertyphoon Reming.

NDF starts campaign to raise funds for victims of 'Reming'

LUCENA CITY—THE COMMUNIST-led National Democratic Front has launched an international fund drive to support relief and rehabilitation efforts of guerrillas in areas heavily devastated by Supertyphoon "Reming."

In a statement of the NDF Information Office, a copy of which was furnished the INQUIRER, the rebel group has asked for support for the relief and rehabilitation activities being undertaken by the communist New People's Army.

"Your assistance will somehow alleviate the sufferings of the victims and give them the necessary and immediate aid they need," the NDF said.

The communist group said donations can be coursed through: NDF St. International Informatie Buro, Account Number 394570642, Rabobank, Utrecht, The Netherlands (t.a.v.: Typhoon victims)

"The revolutionary movement has expressed deep sympathy to the victims and has called for a massive mobilization of the revolutionary forces in order to carry out relief and rehabilitation work among the people affected by the disaster," the NDF said.

The NDF, the political arm of all insurgency groups in the country, said the NPA rebels and contingents of revolutionary mass organizations had been asked to give priority to organizing, assisting and coordinating relief efforts, and ensure that food and other assistance would go to the victims and their families.

But in an earlier interview, Lt. Gen. Alexander Yano, commander of the Armed Forces Southern Luzon Command based in Camp Nakar here, scoffed at the communist's announcement of help.

"That's only a propaganda statement. What help? Can they really help? Maybe, not disrupting the relief operations is the only doable help they can do," Yano said.

He also slammed the CPP for its claim that donated relief goods in the past had been stolen by government officials.

"These terrorists are just seizing the opportunity to recover lost ground through this calamitous incident. A desperate propaganda move. They don't have any chance to recover from the series of debacles in all fronts," Yano said.

Maj. Ramon Rosario, commander of the Civil Relations Service of the Armed Forces of the Philippine in Southern Luzon based in Camp Nakar, branded the CPP announcement of helping typhoon victims as a "deceptive moral positioning." *Delfin Mallari Jr., Inquirer Southern Luzon*

Planned centers for herbal research raise concerns on patent, plagiarism

LA TRINIDAD, BENGUET—THE planned establishment of a multimillion-peso food processing center and a medicinal and herbal resource generation facility at a university here has raised concerns on the possibility of opening up endemic resources and research to business speculators.

Benguet board members on Dec. 4 said they welcomed the plan of the Benguet State University (BSU) to put up the Cordillera Food Processing and Quality Analytical Center (CFPQAC) and the Cordillera Medicinal, Essential Oil, Herbal and Aromatic Crops Development Center (Comeohacdec).

But the board said the projects, which would be completed by 2010 should the P65 million cost be raised, might attract commercial interest and open researches to public consumption and possibly, plagiarism.

But Dr. Violeta Salda, BSU's project development and resource generation chief, said the concerns of the officials. would be remote since the BSU would adopt measures to acquire intellectual property rights over the studies.

She allayed fears that companies might cash in on the researches since the university had just put up an intellectual property rights office tasked with patenting these.

She said the CFPQAC seeks to fill the gap in the province's lack of processing facilities that would convert into finish products its various agricultural products.

She said the Comeohacdec wanted to provide skills and technology for the sustainable production of medicine from plants found in the province.

Salda said the province's indigenous health care system for indigenous peoples has banked on traditional medicine to cure snake and insect bites, skin lesions and stomachache.

"The problem is that these resources are slowly being depleted by inadequate processing and storage facilities," she said.

"Despite vast domestic market size, the present level of processed food marketability is very low but by doing massive awareness and education campaigns, this market could grow high enough to consume a substantial part of any quantum of our processed foods," she said.

Dr. Carlito Laurean, BSU director of research, said the university would be "very protective" of its researches and would issue guidelines on their dissemination, particularly those whose findings could be the subject of patents. *Delmar Cariño, Inquirer Northern Luzon*

Fall guys held in bishop's slay, says church leader

By Marlon Ramos
Inquirer Southern Luzon

CALAMBA CITY—MORE THAN two months after the murder of Bishop Alberto Ramento, a ranking official of the Iglesia Filipina Independiente (IFI) on Tuesday said the four suspects who were arrested by police could just be "fall guys."

"Until now, the IFI church does not believe that Bishop Ramento was killed merely because of ... robbery. He was no ordinary bishop. Somebody really wanted him dead," Bishop Ephraim Fajutagana, IFI secretary general, said in a mobile phone interview.

"Those who were arrested could be fall guys," he added.

Fajutagana said the killing of one of the most revered leaders of the Protestant Church may have something to do with his active involvement in socio-political issues like the strike at Hacienda Luisita.

Before his murder on Oct. 3, Ramento joined protests and mass rallies condemning the unabated killing of militant leaders and journalists under the Arroyo administration.

He also involved himself in other issues regarding workers and farmers in Tarlac province where he was based.

Ramento, 69, the maximo obispo of IFI and member of its Supreme Council of Bishops, was found dead in his room inside the San Sebastian Cathedral in Tarlac City.

He died from several stab wounds in the chest and other parts of the body.

He was the second Protestant priest killed in Tarlac this year.

Ramento's children said the bishop received death threats and had been tailed by suspicious men a few months before his death.

Fajutagana said Aglipayan leaders doubted the result of the investigation of the Tarlac police, which showed that Ramento was stabbed dead by robbers.

"According to the police statements, the four arrested suspects were just petty criminals. They were not hardened-criminals," he said.

Fajutagana also said while the police identified five suspects in the killing, only four have been arrested.

He said although the Aglipayans were hoping that the truth behind Ramento's murder will be uncovered soon, "we have no illusions that its mastermind will be known."

Fajutagana said instead of police investigation, an independent body that would look into the killing should be created.

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INQUIRER Southern Luzon

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A different 'bull run' in Nasugbu

By Marlon Alexander Luistro
Nasugbu, Batangas

WHY GO TO NAVARRE IN SPAIN TO get chased by bulls when you can experience the thrill in the Philippines?

Nasugbu town in Batangas, which prides itself of having white sand beaches, resorts and vacation houses, has just launched its first Fiesta de Toros, highlighting bull runs, on Dec. 2-3 in honor of its patron St. Francis Xavier, a native of Navarre who celebrates his 500th birth anniversary.

The affair marked the first and only local version of Spain's traditional bull run in Pamplona, Navarre, dedicated to its patron saint, which attracts thousands of tourists every year.

The bull run, or *encierro*, in Pamplona is held on July 7 as part of the weeklong feast of Saint Fermin from July 6 to July 14.

Over the past centuries since the 1500s, extremely agitated fighting bulls are set loose through a narrow 825-mile (512.7-km) street, to go after tough runners and thrill-seeking tourists in an exciting—yet deadly—chase.

Two firecracker blasts signal to the participants that the bulls have already been freed from their corral.

Since 1925, 15 people have been killed. They included a 22-year-old American in 1995 and a Basque man in 2004, who fell into a coma for several months after the run.

Over 200 have been seriously injured. Most injuries, however, usually occur during the stampede of people running away from the bulls.

Those surviving the hours-long chase are believed to have been protected by Saint Fermin.

> 'The church wishes that through the intercession of St. Francis Xavier, cows would be blessed by God and good quality beef may be produced'

History

Dez Bautista, founding president of the Film Production Designers Association of the Philippines, conceptualized Nasugbu's Fiesta de Toros, together with Dr. Alberto Wonchai.

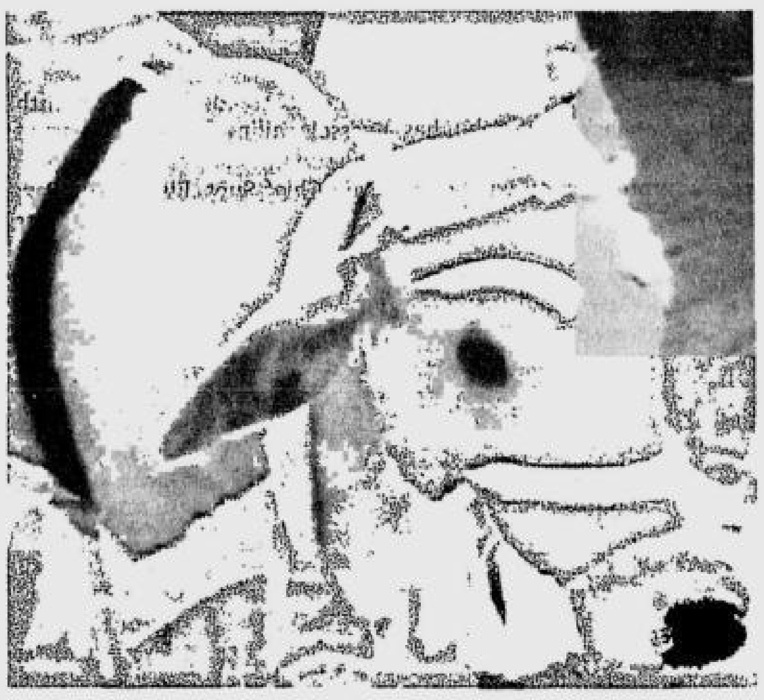
Wonchai admitted that their town might not be prepared for a real bull run as practiced in Spain. For instance, bulls, unlike horses and carabaos, are extremely agitated whenever they are separated one by one from the pack.

THE TOWN modified the event by making papier-mâché or dummy bulls worn like mascots to chase people in the plaza.

PHOTOS BY MARLON ALEXANDER LUISTRO

DOLL cow

SANTA cow



As part of safety measures, the town modified the event by making papier-mâché or dummy bulls worn like mascots to chase people in the plaza. Such festivity was held after the awarding of beautifully decorated cows on Dec. 2, the eve at the fiesta, and the next day's concelebrated Mass.

The idea of a festival arose from Wonchai's childhood experience in 1950s. He recalled how the villagers were "making fun" of the papier-mâché bulls chase.

He also believed that the Jesuit missionaries, who had settled in Nasugbu during the Spanish colonization, popularized the bull run among the natives "to work themselves out of depression."

The tradition, however, died since people then were not yet engaged in tourism promotion, Wonchai explained.

Batangas beef

He said Nasugbu had been searching long for a single product to promote itself apart from beach resorts.

Msgr. Alfredo Madlangbayan, St. Francis Xavier parish priest, lamented that while Batangas had become popular for its beef, the product had never been "given a special treatment."

The term "Batangas beef" has emerged from the good quality cattle produced in the province, the primary source of beef in the Philippines.

Travel website cockatoo.com says that "as local cattle are not of the US hybrid kind, which are not bred for tropical climates, and as less grain is fed to the cattle, the Philippine beef is commonly leaner and has thinner meat fibers than US beef."

As it is leaner, it adds, local beef is also less tender than US beef.

Nasugbu Mayor Antonio Barcelon said Batangas cows were generally fed natural grass mixed with molasses and without any other additives, thus producing quality beef taste.

Since Nasugbu has devoted 78 percent of its land to agriculture, Madlangbayan saw its potential to become the primary source of Batangas beef.

He said the festival encouraged the municipal government to coordinate with concerned sectors for the improvement of its breeding cows and to teach farmers how to produce quality beef and dairy products.

At the same time, Wonchai said it would serve as an invitation to rich people vacationing in Punta Fuego to share their resources for the cattle industry, thus offering more livelihood opportunities for the townsfolk.

This year, colorfully decorated cows represented the 43 barangays, each with a distinct theme reflecting Filipino creativity in the Parada de Toros.

Key design concepts included "Money Pac Cow," featuring a cow wearing boxing gloves and rosary beads paying tribute to boxing hero Manny Pacquiao. Other cows were dressed as Santa Claus, peacock, American Indian and a doll.

All the animals were blessed during the parade.

Bests

Awards were given for the Most Beautifully Decorated Cow, Most Beautifully Decorated Carromata, Biggest Cow, Healthiest Cow and Sexiest Cow.

Patterned after the night drinking spree in Pamplona, a "Roast Beef Festival" and Oktoberfest were held in the evening of Dec. 2.

Lechon beef and beer overflowed, while rock bands performed.

But more than the product orientation and tourism pull, the festival prides itself of a strong religious orientation, honoring St. Francis Xavier, the patron of missionaries.

Wonchai noted that the successful festivals in the country were those bearing a religious touch, like the Ati-Atihan dedicated to the Sto. Niño.

St. Francis Xavier's relics, which had just arrived last month, were shown in the Mass at the newly constructed 1,101-square-meter parish church bearing his name.

"New relic, new festival, new church—this is what we have in our fiesta," Wonchai said.

Madlangbayan stressed: "The church wishes that through the intercession of St. Francis Xavier, male and female cows would be blessed by God and good quality Batangas beef may be produced in the future."

Carabao program boosts income of Cavite farmers

By Niña Catherine Calleja
General Trias, Cavite

KNOWN FOR ITS *"KASILYO"* (white cheese) and rice fields, the town of General Trias in Cavite has successfully developed a new livelihood for farmers and exploring carabao-based dairy products.

The wives of farmers expanded their roles from housekeeping to processing of dairy products, such as white cheese, *pastillas*, chocolate milk, milk gelatin and yogurt.

Their biggest markets are Tagaytay, Cebu and other key cities.

Nerissa Marquez, head of the municipal agricultural office, said the dairy raisers' multipurpose cooperative and the government's carabao development program had contributed largely to augment the income of many farmers.

The CDP, according to the Department of Agriculture's Philippine Carabao Center (PCC), is a continuous and organized effort to increase the genetic potential of the native carabao for meat and milk. It also aims to develop buffalo-based and related enterprises to increase farmers' income and improve nutrition in farming communities.

With 13 centers nationwide, the PCC aims to conserve, propagate and promote carabao as a source of draft animal power, meat, and milk that will benefit rural farmers. It conducts research and technical studies on carabao and its related products.

In 1997, Marquez said that through PCC technology, the breeding line of local water buffaloes through artificial insemination had improved. Superior genes of carabaos were introduced to raise meat and milk production.

She noted, however, that many farmers could not afford the artificial insemination services.

Thus, the bull loan program was launched in the last quarter of 1999. Under the project of the PCC and local governments, purebred murrah bulls are lent to farmers who cannot afford the cost of artificial insemination.

> A recipient of the bull loan program said his life had improved. He can now send his three children to college

A FARMER prepares the milk to create milk gelatin.

NIÑA CATHERINE CALLEJA

Twelve farmers were awarded two to three buffaloes. It was agreed that the farmer will own a buffalo if the animal has already given birth to 25 offspring, Marquez said. The offspring will then be forwarded to the PCC, which will award the animals as loan to new recipients.

Increased income

A rice farm tenant for almost 24 years in Barangay Navaro, Danilo Colos, 48, is one of the 12 recipients of the bull loan program. He was awarded one male and three female buffaloes in 2002.

Colos said his life had since improved. He can now send his three children to college. From P200 daily, he earns an average of P500 from selling bottles of milk downtown.

His family used to earn very little from milking three native buffaloes as they tried to augment their income from their share in rice harvests. They always ran short of money to meet daily needs, Colos said.

"The bull loan was really a great help to poor farmers like us," Colos said in Filipino.

Recipients of the buffaloes underwent screening through inspection and interviews, Marquez said.

One requirement of the PCC and municipal office is the buffalo's housing facility, she said.

"This (bull loan) is a continuous program because up to the present, our office has been receiving many requests from farmers for loans," she said.

A similar program, the Modified Paiwi Dairy Carabao Module of the United Nations Development Fund for Women (Unifem), was initiated by the PCC and the local government in General Trias in 2002. Initial funds amounted to P467,750.

Under the agreement, 10 dairy buffaloes were awarded to 10 farmers, and each of them must return a year-old female carabao for every breedable carabao loaned. The returned animal will go to another cooperative member to ensure expansion of the project.

Dairy cooperative

The formation of the General Trias Dairy Raisers Multi-purpose Cooperative in August last year was a big factor in achieving the success of the carabao-based livelihood program.

Marquez said the producers were assured of market for carabao milk. "Previously, producers individually sold bottles of milk in the public market and it was really difficult to look for buyers."

The cooperative now buys and collects the milk, she said. The women process the milk into different kinds of dairy-based products and sell them within and outside the town.

As part of the CDP, a team from the PCC-University of the Philippines at Los Baños conducted a 16-week training on dairy production and marketing in September last year. The seminar aimed to upgrade farmers' knowledge on milk processing, product development, marketing and bookkeeping.

Marquez said about 50 farmers participated in the seminar.

Among them was Victoria Bataclan, 38, a farmer's wife and beneficiary of the Modified Paiwi Program. She said learning to cook dairy products was not a difficult task. "In fact, we enjoy our new job and at the same time we get additional income," she said.

She nets about P220 per day, she said. Citing records, she said that the average net gain of the cooperative in processing and selling milk products reached P20,000 monthly.

Today, the cooperative plans to explore other ways to expand its market to Metro Manila and other regions, Bataclan said.

New pact allows RP nurses to work in 9 Asean countries

GEARING UP FOR THE REAL THING: Antiriot cops vastly outnumber protesters at a rally in Barangay Guizo near the Cebu International Convention Center. EDWIN BACASMAS

CEBU CITY—ECONOMIC MINISTERS of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (Asean) are expected to sign here next week an agreement that deals with a tangible and, of late, controversial issue for Filipinos—employment for nurses—during a summit here next week, officials said yesterday.

Philippine Foreign Assistant Secretary Luis Cruz said the ministers would be signing a mutual recognition agreement (MRA) on nursing services which will allow Filipino nurses, for example, to work in the nine other Asean member countries without the need to acquire licenses for each state.

A similar Asean MRA for engineers was signed last year, while talks are ongoing to extend such "seamless, borderless" arrangement to architects and accountants next year, he said in a media briefing at the newly built Cebu International Convention Center. ***(See related stories in Business, Page B1, and on Page A17.)***

Security, trade and energy will top the summit agenda, with declarations expected on combating terrorism, accelerating economic integration and boosting energy security.

North Korea's nuclear weapons program is also set for discussion when the heads of China, Japan and South Korea meet their counterparts from the 10 Asean member-states on Dec. 11-13.

Asean is also pursuing negotiations for MRAs in the architectural, accountancy, surveying, medical practitioners, tourism and information technology professions, Cruz said.

In a separate interview, Philippine Ambassador to Malaysia Victoriano Lecaros, spokesperson of the 12th Asean Summit on Dec. 10-14, said the MRA would also "try to reconcile the different educational systems that produce nurses" within the Asean. He noted, for example, that the system in one country may be modeled after the British, while another would be American.

Cruz said the agreement would "allow nurses within Asean countries to move freely within the Asean member countries and practice their profession."

He said one of the main beneficiaries would be the Philippines, where there is an exodus of nurses to work in hospitals in the United States, Britain, Singapore, the Middle East and other countries. Asean groups Brunei, Cambodia, Indonesia, Laos, Malaysia, Burma (Myanmar), the Philippines, Singapore, Thailand and Vietnam.

Some business leaders say the agreement can boost the region's healthcare industry by raising the standards of training in the nursing profession and attracting foreign investment into the sector.

Migrant workers

Another expected Asean declaration in this summit that is "close to our (Filipinos) heart" is one on migrant workers, particularly on the protection of the rights and their "access to the justice system" of their host countries, Lecaros added.

The declaration will serve as a "code of conduct" on how countries should treat these workers, especially nonprofessionals, but also asks that states sending out workers should have them fully documented.

It will also be aimed at addressing other "problems" pertaining to migrant workers' salaries, working hours and benefits, such as health coverage and vacation leaves, Lecaros said.

The Philippines will again be a beneficiary, because of the hundreds of thousands of Filipino maids working overseas, a substantial number of them suffering from abuse at the hands of their employers.

Lecaros said this action on the part of Asean should be considered further encouragement for migrant workers in the region to undergo the legal process of employment, otherwise they could not easily gain such "access" if they were to work as undocumented or overstaying aliens.

The Philippines wants to use its chairmanship of the Asean to promote regional social development. But guns and money are likely to overshadow the theme of "One Caring and Sharing Community."

Counterterrorism will take center stage during the Dec. 11 summit when leaders hope to sign a convention clamping down on the unregulated movement of arms and Muslim militants among Southeast Asia's remote isles and coves.

National security agencies would coordinate to track, arrest, detain and rehabilitate suspected militants, and countries would also beef up border controls and suppress terrorist financing, according to a draft document seen by Reuters.

Wary of China's growing regional might, the Southeast Asian leaders are also set to agree to accelerate a goal for an Asean community in economics, security and sociocultural affairs to 2015 from 2020.

But hopes for a European-style single market for goods, services, capital and skilled labor are unlikely to be realized in nine years, given the wide variations in economic development in Southeast Asia. The region's free trade area, launched in 1992, remains riddled with temporary exclusions.

Reports from Volt Contreras, AFP and Reuters

Maximum tolerance for protesters but...

CEBU CITY—THE GOVERNMENT will exercise maximum tolerance in dealing with protesters during the 12th Association of Southeast Asian Nations (Asean) Summit here next week as long as they stay away from the venues of the meetings.

Philippine Ambassador to Malaysia Victoriano Lecaros, the summit's spokesperson, said protesters would be allowed to hold rallies but only in "designated areas," which are hundreds of meters away from the venues and ceremonial routes.

Keeping the places clear of any protest action is part of security measures put in place to ensure the safety of the heads of states and other summit delegates, affirmed retired Gen. Leo Alvez, assistant secretary general for security.

Alvez yesterday said in a briefing at the Cebu International Convention Center, one of the venues, that the security preparations were made in coordination with the Philippine National Police and the Armed Forces of the Philippines.

No permit, no rally

He noted that the decision on whether to give militant groups permit to rally at specific designated areas would be left to the local government units.

More than 100 members of the militant labor group Kilusang Mayo Uno yesterday tried to get close to Malacañang sa Sugbo, the official residence of the President in Cebu, at the Waterfront area but were stopped by police, causing traffic along Osmeña Boulevard, near the Basilica del Sto. Niño.

The group decided to board jeepneys and Isuzu Elf trucks and proceed to the CICC but was stopped by police at the Mandaue Palace of Justice, about 300 meters from their destination.

A "no-rally, no-permit" policy has been enforced near the summit venues, including the Waterfront Cebu City Hotel and Marco Polo Plaza here, the CICC in Mandaue, and Shangri-La's Mactan Island Resort and Spa in Lapulapu City.

Protesters are also not allowed along the 25-kilometer route connecting the venues.

Navy men on board rubber boats are patrolling the Mactan and Hilutungan channels to bar people from mounting a fluvial protest to Shangri-La, where the Asean heads of state are to be billeted.

Foreign protesters

In Manila, a police intelligence official told the INQUIRER that around 150 foreign activists flying in to join the rallies were on the watch list of authorities.

The source, who asked not to be named for security reasons, showed to the INQUIRER the names of the activists, most of them coming from the United States. Other activists are expected to arrive from Australia, Bangaladesh, Belgium, Canada, China, Denmark, India, Japan, Korea, Malaysia, Nepal, the Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Taiwan, Turkey, Switzerland, United Kingdom and the United States.

The foreigners will also attend the 2nd Asian Civil Society Conference at Montebello Villa Hotel in Barangay Banilad, Cebu City, which will be held simultaneously with the summit on Dec. 10-12.

Intelligence sources said some of the activists had been in the country to attend the KMU's International Labor Solidarity Mission in Lopez, Quezon, on April 30. They belong to the Canada Human Rights Center, the International Churches Council Movement, Canada International Politics for Asia, National League of People's Struggle, Labor Rights Association, Center for Constitutional Research, National Council of Churches in Australia, and Bagong Alyansang Makabayan-USA.

Task Force Masid

Security officials have formed "Task Group Masid," which is composed of intelligence units that will closely monitor the movements of foreigners joining the demonstrations against the summit. The group is under "Task Force Cebu," which handles overall security.

Chief Supt. Silverio Alarcio Jr., police director for Central Visayas and head of Task Force Cebu, has warned that foreign activists joining any protest action will be arrested and charged in court for violating immigration laws.

They will only be allowed to observe the rally but they cannot participate, Alarcio said.

Fisher folk leaders who planned to organize the fluvial protest raised alarm over the alleged intensified military presence in coastal communities in Cebu.

The Kilusang Mangingisda (KM), a national coalition of five fisherfolk federations and 13 regional groups, said it had received reports that military and police officers would check every house in Barangay Mabaling, Cebu City and Talisay City to discourage residents from joining the fluvial protest.

In Tacloban City, police have tightened security at ports with vessels sailing for Cebu as part of the summit's security measures, , said Chief Supt. Eliseo Dela Paz, police regional director. ***Reports from Blanche S. Rivera, Alcuin Papa and Gil Cabucungan in Manila; and Irene Sino-Cruz, Jhunnex Napallacan and Joey Gabieta, Inquirer Visayas***

P500-M Cebu convention center formally opens

From page A1

Even though workmen were still applying finishing touches at some hidden corners, hosting officials welcomed the media to the P500-million Cebu International Convention Center (CICC), describing the completion of this 3.8-hectare facility in just eight months to be "short of a miracle."

The CICC is the rushed centerpiece of what summit organizers now consider Cebu's "coming-out party" as a premier convention host outside Metro Manila.

Cebu became the designated host of the annual gathering of the 10 Asean neighbors and six other partner-states, when the Philippines assumed the rotating Asean chairmanship one year ahead of schedule. Military-ruled Burma (Myanmar), supposedly this year's host, decided to forgo its turn amid pressures in and outside the regional bloc.

Media handouts, however, indicate that most of the senior officials and ministers meetings, up to the leaders' summit proper on Dec. 10-13, are to be held at the Shangri-La Mactan, a luxury hotel normally about 30 minutes by car from the CICC. Only a photo session marking the arrival of the Asean heads of state on Dec. 10 is scheduled at the newly built facility.

Ambassador Marciano Paynor, chair of the national organizing committee, explained that the CICC, aside from housing the international press center, will host some events involving the heads of state, details of which could not be immediately released for security reasons.

"This imposing edifice was built in response to an imposing challenge. And the Cebuanos are proud to say that we have delivered," Cebu Gov. Gwendolyn Garcia said at the CICC's first Asean press briefing.

The spot where the CICC now sits was designated by the previous provincial administration as the future site of the Cebu Mega-Dome—a sports arena—then initially estimated to cost P250 million or half of the CICC's price tag, she later explained in an interview.

"We were planning to build a coliseum, with bleachers and all" until it was announced by Malacañang in December last year that her province would be the next host of the Asean summit, she recalled.

"We have to change the plans to turn it into a convention center," Garcia added.

The Philippines hosted the 3rd Asean Summit in December 1987, and the 3rd Asean Informal Summit in November 1999. Both were held in Manila.

Aside from the summit among Asean leaders, the Cebu meetings will include those of Asean and its six dialogue partners—China, Japan, India, Australia, South Korea and New Zealand.

Three local governments are actually sharing hosting chores for this gathering of 16 leaders, namely the cities of Cebu, Mandaue and Lapu-lapu.

The two-tier CICC has a total floor area of 27,000 sqm, requiring "2 million man-hours" to build since the April 7 groundbreaking. At one point, a day's work employed up to 1,600 construction workers.

Palace: Gov't has no choice on Smith till end of judicial process

From page A1

claiming custody of Smith states: "The custody over any United States personnel over whom the Philippines is to exercise jurisdiction shall immediately reside with United States military authorities, if they so request, from the commission of the offense until completion of all judicial proceedings."

Romulo-Kenney meeting

The US Ambassador to the Philippines said Smith was seized from US custody when he was ordered to be temporarily jailed at the Makati City Jail by the judge who convicted him on Monday.

Ambassador Kristie Kenney met with Foreign Secretary Alberto Romulo yesterday afternoon to get Smith out of the Makati City Jail and have him in US custody until after the completion of all judicial proceedings, including the Supreme Court ruling on the verdict of life imprisonment against Smith.

"We are working together to fix a problem concerning the seizure of Lance Corporal Smith and the Visiting Forces Agreement (VFA)," Kenney told reporters following her almost hourlong meeting with Romulo at the Department of Foreign Affairs building in Pasay City.

On Tuesday, the embassy sent a note verbale to the DFA seeking custody of Smith, citing the VFA provision.

The DFA affirmed this provision in a transmittal letter when it sent a copy of the note verbale to the sala of Makati Judge Benjamin Pozon a couple of hours after receiving it from the embassy.

RP committed to VFA

Ermita said the Philippines was committed to the VFA. "Since we signed VFA and this is so provided, then let's follow what we agreed with the US," he said.

The executive secretary said the rape case should serve as an "eye-opener" for both the executive and legislative branches of government in reviewing the VFA, specifically its provisions on "extraordinary cases."

"We should clear up when the judicial proceeding has terminated or whether the one-year period should include the review. The case is considered not yet final and is under court action because there is still a period for appeal," Ermita said.

He said that while he agreed that the provision on custody should be reviewed, it could not benefit Nicole because the VFA was clear on this issue.

On military mission

The DFA chose not to give any statements regarding the Romulo-Kenney meeting, but Kenney apparently raised the issue of compliance with the VFA "which governs our military assistance to this country."

Kenney said Smith was "not a private citizen" but a member of the US military who was in the Philippines "on a military mission" and was therefore "governed by the VFA."

"It's important for all of us that we get this sorted out so that all sides comply. I'm not here to complain about the verdict. This was carried out in the Philippine court with a Philippine judge as our agreement calls for. And now there's simply the issue of complying with the remaining piece which is that Lance Corporal Smith belongs in US custody until the conclusion of all judicial proceedings," Kenney said.

The ambassador said the Philippines and the United States would continue to be "partners" as the two countries have been for generations.

"Our countries have been partners for many, many years. We've fought together, our father and grandfathers to defend freedom in the Philippines, to liberate the Philippines. We've worked together in the mudslides of Leyte, now in Bicol, and we are going to continue to be that," Kenney said.

"It's in that spirit that we're here working together as friends to solve a problem. I'm very hopeful and confident that we'll continue as partners to work through this and fix it," the ambassador stressed.

Ed Malaya, DFA spokesperson, yesterday reiterated the government's position when asked to comment on Pozon's statement that he was waiting for the United States and Philippine governments to agree on the facility where Smith should serve his sentence.

"What has been agreed upon is that the US should have custody of Smith. The sentence is not yet being served until the final determination of the case by the Supreme Court," Malaya said.

Tantamount to setting free

Much like during the rape trial, Malaya said that should Smith be placed under US custody from the jailhouse while the appeal of his conviction was pending, "there is a standing policy that he would not be taken out of the country."

Nicole would have none of this.

Citing the "interest of justice," Nicole asked Pozon to deny Smith's motion to be released from the Makati City Jail (MCJ) and returned to the US Embassy.

"If the court turns him over to the US Embassy, the same would be tantamount to setting free or granting liberty to a convicted accused for a nonbailable offense, something that is not allowed under Philippine law," read Nicole's motion.

"Her submission of this opposition is rendered necessary because the supposed defender of the interest of the people of the Philippines has joined the cause of the accused. [It] is also justified because the private complainant is perhaps the party most interested in ensuring that the conviction of accused Smith is sustained and that he does not take flight while his appeal is pending," the motion read.

Smith, 21, has been detained at the MCJ since Monday afternoon, when Pozon sentenced him to up to 40 years behind bars for raping Nicole while she was dead drunk inside a moving van at the Subic Bay Freeport before midnight on Nov. 1. The judge ordered Smith to pay Nicole P100,000 in damages.

While he found Smith "guilty beyond reasonable doubt," Pozon acquitted his fellow Marines, Lance Corporals Keith Silkwood and Dominic Duplantis and Staff Sgt. Chad Carpentier.

The convicted soldier's new lead counsel, Jose Justiniano, asked the court on Tuesday to recall its commitment order incarcerating Smith at the MCJ pending an agreement between Philippine and US governments on where he should be detained.

'Lawyering for US Embassy'

Reached for comment on the private complainant's position, Justiniano said: "First and foremost, the complainant has no personality to file the opposition because her only interest here is civil in nature and the court had already awarded her damages. They can't meet us squarely on this argument."

Ursua's collaborating counsel Rene Saguisag filed a separate opposition, scoring the Department of Justice for "its seeming continuing role as defense counsel."

"We cannot be left defenseless, without any remedy, because of such sad transmogrification where it lawyers for the American Embassy. National sovereignty and dignity are on the line here," Saguisag said in the motion.

Rowers' 5th place best by RP athletes

By Ted S. Melendres
Sports Editor

DOHA, QATAR—EVERGREEN ROWERS BENjamin Tolentino Jr. and Jose Rodriguez ruled the Final B race of the men's double sculls and settled for fifth place, the best finish for the embattled Philippine contingent Wednesday in the 15th Asian Games here.

On a day the highly touted women's bowlers were shut out of the medals for the third straight day in the trios and swimmers' hopes sank deeper in the pool of the Hamad Aquatic Center, the never-say-die Tolentino and Rodriguez produced a performance that could have landed them the bronze.

The pair beat the third- and fourth-best times of the Chinese and Indian pairs, respectively, in the Final A medal race with a clocking of three minutes and 22.46 seconds.

The Uzbekistan tandem of Vladimir Chernenko and Ruslan Naurzaliyev took the gold in 3:16.71, with South Korea's Kim Dal-ho and Han Jung-wook snatching the silver with a time of 3:20.01 from China's Su Hui and Cui Yonghui (3:22.47).

The women's trios of Liza del Rosario, Marianne Daisy Posadas and Jojo Canare rolled 3664 pinfalls in the women's trios and could only manage a seventh-place finish, four rungs above the second RP trio of Liza Clutario, Irene Garcia-Benitez and Cecil Yap who pooled 482.

South Korea's Kim Hyo-mi, Hwang Sun-ok and Nam Bo-ra nailed the gold with 3983, with Malaysia's Team 1 settling for the silver with 3973 and Korea's Team 2 clinching the bronze with 3940.

Teams in the second block of the men's event, including the RP Team 1 of Marwin Tee, Biboy Rivera and CJ Suarez, will roll their last three games today.

The RP Team 2 of Paeng Nepomuceno Tyrone Ongpauco and Chester King completed its games yesterday and was hopelessly mired in eighth spot with 3734 pinfalls, 355 pins off the leading Malaysian trio and 137 behind the third-running Saudi Team 2.

Tee's trio lay in 20th spot after the first three games with 1822.

Welterweight Frances Joven, overpowered and outsmarted by a flashy Angkhan Chomphuphuang of Thailand, hit the canvas in the third round and lost by CCL (compulsory count limit). He became the second Filipino after Delfin Boholst to bow out of the boxing competition.

Seven-time Asiad veteran Nathaniel "Tac" Padilla scored 556 in the two stages of the 25-meter rapid fire pistol qualification and settled for 17th place, 14 points off winning score of China's Zhang Penhui.

But the biggest disappointment for officials of the RP contingent was the baseball team, which had hoped to beat the Thais to fifth place in the six-team competition at the desert ballpark north of here.

After four successive lopsided defeats to the Japanese, Chinese, South Koreans and the Taiwanese, the once-proud Filipinos bowed to a Thai squad that didn't even get close to beating them in last year's Southeast Asian Games in Manila, 1-8.

With the score tied at 1-1 after eight innings, pitcher Darwin dela Calzada was inexplicably pulled out after allowing just one run and holding the enemy to a single hit.

The Thais peppered relievers Ernesto Binarao and Charlie Labrador with seven more hits at the top of the ninth, scoring the seven winning runs, before starter Krong Heebthong fanned the last three Filipino batters he faced.

"They shouldn't have been here in the first place," Philippine Olympic Committee president José "Peping" Cojuangco said of the team that made it to the RP delegation only after managing to raise funds in Manila at the last minute.

The brother-sister team of Kennevic and Kennie Asuncion bowed out in badminton mixed doubles with a 31-13, 21-15 loss to Malaysians Kien Keat Koo and Ling Quang Swee.

Beach volleyball provided the only bright note for the Filipinos overnight with two victories at the Sports City sandcourts here.

Diane Pascua and Heidi Ilustrea overwhelmed the Sri Lankan pair of Geethika Lalani Gunawardana and Withanage Sujeewa Wijesinghe, 21-12, 21-9, while the men's pair of Parley Tupaz and Rhovyl Verayo whipped the Palestine tandem of Ayman Odeh and Rafi Asfour, 21-8, 21-10.

The Filipinas reached the battle for seventh place while the men made it to the clash for 9th today.

There was no stopping the powerhouse Chinese in swimming, where Filipinos have not made a dent—save for Miguel Molina's fourth-place windup in the men's 400-meter individual medley on Day 1.

Molina wound up third in his heat of the 200-m IM in 2:08.18 and advanced as the seventh of eight qualifiers in the finals later in the day.

But Fil-American Erica Totten wound up fifth (59.44 seconds) in the 100m freestyle heats, Kendrick Uy bombed out in the 100m race with a sixth-place finish (52.83), Denjylie Cordero settled for sixth in the women's 200m breaststroke (2:41.41).

Marichi Gandiongco timed 9:14.80 and finished third behind Hong Kong's Carmen Nam (9:03.72) and Malaysia's Ong Ming Xiu (9:12.26) in the first final grouping in the 800m freestyle. But her final placing is expected to sink after the four fastest semifinal qualifiers in the second group take to the pool later tonight.

In weightlifting, Renante Briones fouled in three snatch attempts at 150 kilograms and in as many tries at 182 kg in the clean jerk and failed to finish.

Late Sports
15TH ASIAN GAMES
DOHA 2006
More sports and Asian Games stories on A25 to 30

Tigers hard work finally bears fruit; Barakos up

By Musong R. Castillo

GAMES TOMORROW (*Ynares Center*)
4:35 p.m.—Air21 vs. Red Bull
7:20 p.m.—Purefoods vs. Sta. Lucia

FINALLY FOR COCA-COLA, AN EFFORT REwarded, and two-fold at that.

Rolling up their sleeves like they always do, the Tigers finally hit paydirt last night after John Arigo canned four points inside the last 25.2 seconds to secure an 85-81 victory over Alaska and the inside track in the last wild card berth in the Talk 'N Text Philippine Cup.

"It's nice to finally get a win," Coca-Cola coach Binky Favis said. "We have been deserving of one since three games back. And it was tough (losing) because the guys have been giving it their best every night."

The Tigers snapped a seven-game slide with their fourth win in 15 games and went ahead in their duel with Welcoat for the last slot.

Welcoat, playing without Rob Wainwright and Jojo Tangkay, slumped to a sixth straight loss later at the Araneta Coliseum after Red Bull broke away early and cruised to a 97-78 victory.

In dropping to the cellar alone at 3-12, the Dragons now have to hurdle three formidable teams—Alaska, San Miguel and Sta. Lucia—in their elimination round schedule to keep their hopes of advancing alive.

Red Bull, which played without suspended coach Yeng Guiao, was never threatened in rising to 10-5 for solo second place.

Alaska, meanwhile, lost for the second straight game, its aspirations of making the quarterfinals outright dimming after dropping to 5-9 overall.

Tournament format calls for the tailender to get the boot and the top two teams to earn Final Four berths outright, the next three to march automatically to the quarterfinals and the next four to slug it out—single-round style—with the topnotcher joining the quarterfinalists.

The scores:

First Game

COCA-COLA 85—Arigo 28, Misolas 15, Yeo 9, Peek 9, Antonio 7, Miranda 5, Pacana 4, Salangsang 4, Caceres 2, Ramos 2, Gavino 0, Ferreria 0.

ALASKA 81—Miller 18, Cariaso 12, Dela Cruz 11, Thoss 10, Juinio 9, Ferriols 8, Singson 7, Belasco 6, Laure 0, Bajar 0.

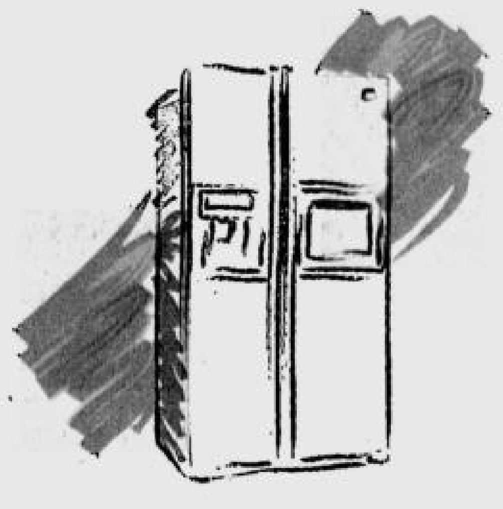
Quarters: 20-19, 52-37, 64-62, 85-81.

Second Game

RED BULL 97—Sharma 16, Villanueva 16, Valenzuela 13, Najorda 10, Cruz 8, Fonacier 7, Baguio 7, Alvarez 6, Robinson 6, Bugia 5, Ybañez 3, Pennisi 0.

WELCOAT 78—Reyes 18, Cabalu 14, Ibañez 11, Gelig 10, Lao 7, Sagad 6, Baguion 4, Lopez 3, Sta. Maria 3, Mente 2.

Quarters: 30-15, 53-33, 70-50, 97-78.



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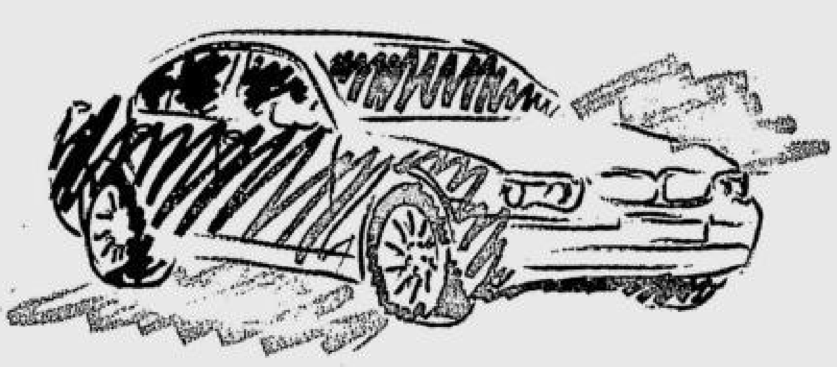

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Matatag na haligi ng
inyong kinabukasan

'3G' trains to serve LRTA riders Dec. 11

More comfortable, safer rides assured for Metro commuters

By Riza T. Olchondra

STARTING NEXT WEEK, THE LIGHT Rail Transit Authority (LRTA) will also have its own "3G" network.

LRTA Administrator Mel Robles announced in a recent media briefing that starting Dec. 11, 12 "3G" trains will be added to the LRT Line 1's fleet of trains which ply the Monumento to Baclaran route and vice versa.

Robles said in a media briefing that the new trains are called "3G" (third generation) because they are the third and newest batch of trains procured by the LRTA since its establishment in the 1980s.

The first-generation trains from ACEC of Belgium are now about 20 years old while the second-generation trains from Adtranz of South Korea are about a decade old. Both companies are now part of Bombardier Transportation Ltd.

The third-generation trains were made in Japan by Kinki Sharyo and provided by the Manila Tren Consortium.

According to Robles, the new trains "are more modern, more reliable, and cooler," guaranteeing LRT Line 1 passengers a more comfortable and faster ride.

Two of the 12 four-coach trains—with built-in air-conditioning systems and computerized signaling systems—will start operating on Dec. 11 after the inauguration on Saturday. President Macapagal-Arroyo and Japan Prime Minister Shinzo Abe will grace the occasion before heading to Cebu for the 12th Asean Summit.

By March 2007, all of the 12 third-generation trains will have been deployed.

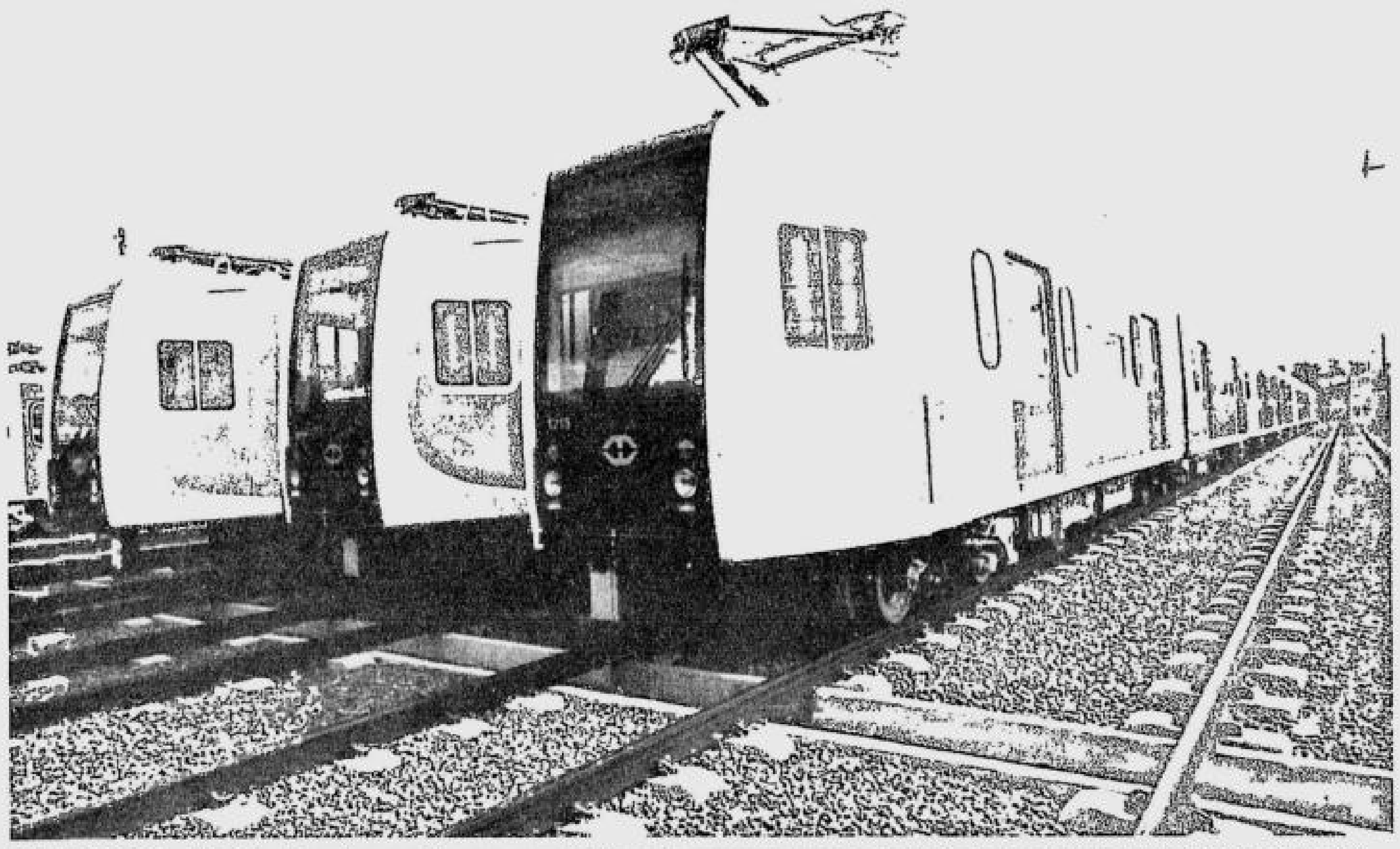
The procurement of the new trains is part of the P8.893-billion capacity expansion project of the LRTA, which was mainly funded by the Japan Bank for International Cooperation.

The expansion is in line with Ms Arroyo's Strong Republic Transit System (SRTS) program to decongest Metro Manila and provide a seamless and convenient mass transportation for the citizenry.

Robles said the project aims to increase the LRT Line 1's peak capacity of 27,000 passengers per hour per direction (pphpd) to 40,000 pphpd, and reduce the ideal waiting time for the arrival of trains from the current five minutes to three minutes.

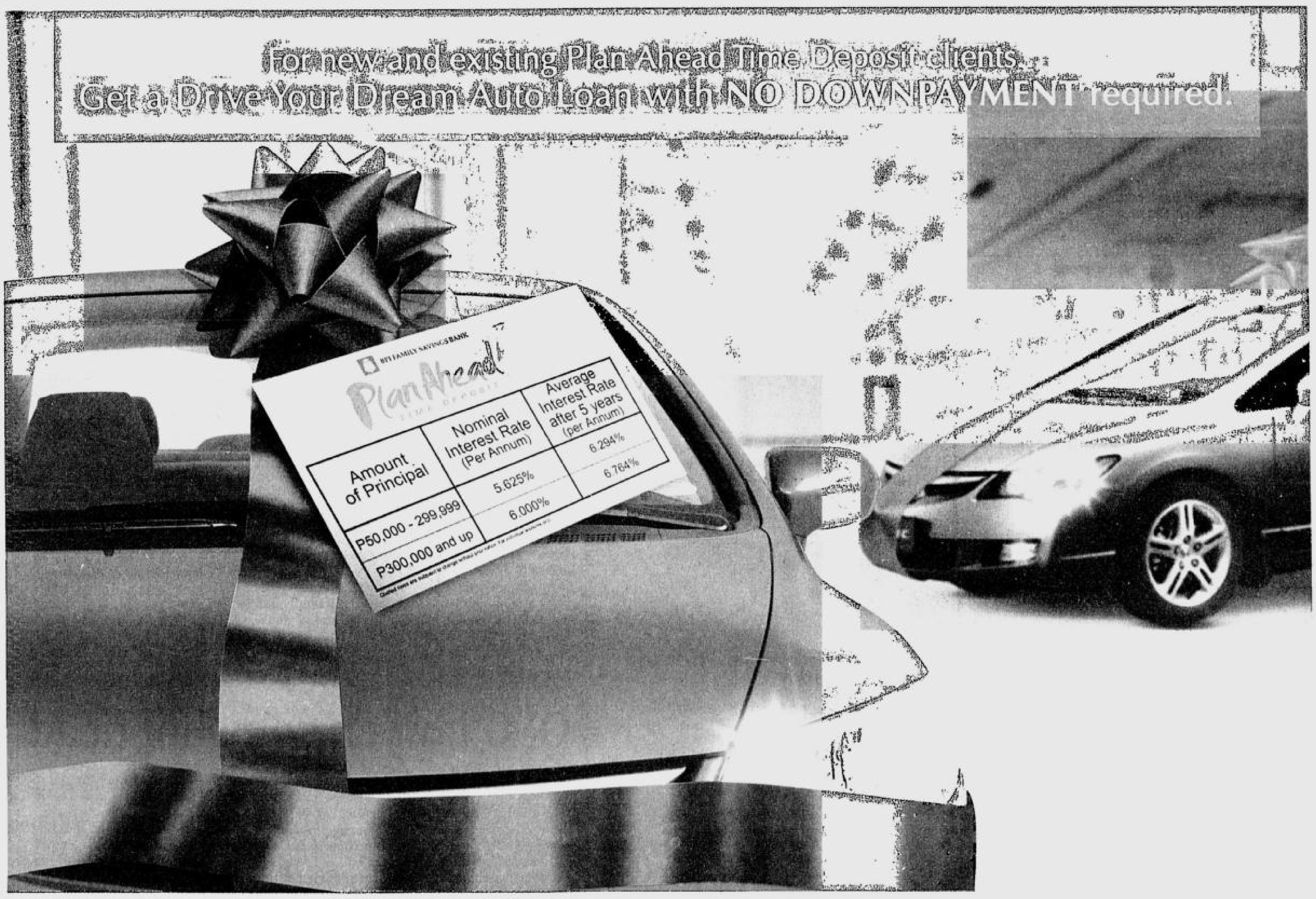
"Currently, we are transporting an average of 350,000 to 375,000 passengers in a day, but now we will see an increase to about 500,000 passengers per day," Robles said in a media briefing. "This will significantly reduce traffic congestion in Metro Manila."

'3G' TRAINS/ A20



THE RIDING public is looking forward to a more reliable and convenient mode of public transport when the Light Rail Transit Authority starts operating its third generation trains on Monday.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO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Makati students return to school on Monday

By Tarra V. Quismundo

ITS BACK TO SCHOOL ON MONDAY for students of San Isidro National High School in Makati City after experts declared that chemical levels on the campus have gone down to normal.

Makati Councilor Jejomar Erwin Binay made the announcement yesterday after meeting with school officials and toxicology experts.

Classes have been suspended at the four-story public school since Nov. 26, when a cabinet inside the laboratory on the fourth floor collapsed, spilling various chemicals.

"It will be open on Monday, but we will not be using the fourth floor. Tests showed that chemical levels in the school are now below allowable levels but the fourth floor will remain closed for safety reasons," Binay said in a press briefing.

The councilor, son of Makati Mayor Jejomar Binay, said the school laboratory would have to be "relocated" to ensure that chemicals stored inside are kept safe, while the entire fourth floor would have to be redesigned.

"We have to comply with [the decision to have] additional cleaning operations at the fourth floor and increase ventilation. Then we have to replace the flooring. In short, there will be renovations on the fourth floor," said the younger Binay.

The cleanup of the contaminated high school had taken almost a week as emergency workers had to make sure all of the building's four floors were completely clear of chemicals.

The cleanup operation was conducted by Makati and Pasay rescue teams and the Bureau of Fire Protection's Special Rescue Unit. The team collected 1,855 kilos of chemical waste inside the school which were disposed of on Nov. 30 by private waste management services firm Green Planet Management.

School officials are expected to schedule Saturday makeup classes for the school's 1,200 students to allow them to catch up on their lessons.

To avert a similar incident, Mayor Binay said a local task force has been created to strengthen the monitoring of all institutions that keep chemicals within their premises.

He added that the task force, composed of local environment, health and education officials and counterparts from national government agencies, would constantly inspect schools, private clinics and other establishments that use and keep chemicals to make sure that these are properly kept.

Gov't cares little for flood victims

On Target

Ramon Tulfo

BASE OPERATIONS, VILLAMOR Air Base—It's 5:52 a.m., Dec. 6, 2006 as I write this column.

My' secretary, Janet Magracia-Bandoy, and I have been here since 5 a.m. yesterday, Dec. 5, waiting for the C-130 Hercules aircraft that will ferry us and 2,824 lbs. of relief goods intended for Daraga, Albay. The town, where Janet comes from, was among those hardest hit by Supertyphoon "Reming."

I have solicited donations of canned goods, new and used clothes, medicines, mats, slippers and P35,000 in cash from friends for Daraga flood victims. I intend to use the money to buy rice and water, which are in short supply in Daraga, and neighboring areas like Legazpi City.

My public service program, "Isumbong mo kay Tulfo" (yes, sir, it's still alive and kicking even if it has been forced off the air on radio and television), has answered an urgent plea from the government and the Red Cross for water, food and medicines for "Reming" survivors.

But it seems the government, as a whole, really doesn't care for the plight of the flood victims.

Why? The lone aircraft that was supposed to transport the food, medicine and clothes to Legazpi City and Virac, Catanduanes, yesterday (Dec. 5) was used instead to ferry the bodyguards of President Macapagal-Arroyo who visited Albay.

The flood victims of Daraga and Virac had to bear hunger and sickness to give way to the President's visit to Albay.

(Ma'am, you didn't have to go to flood-stricken areas to show your concern. You could have issued your orders to help the victims from Malacañang. You're not running for reelection, are you?)

The relief items bound for Daraga via Legazpi City (my goods) and those for Virac (from "Operation Blessing" of the religious group 700 Club) would have to wait until today. I don't see any relief goods from the Department of Social Welfare and Development.

But today, the relief goods will be delivered to the flood victims late. The flight schedule of the C-130 aircraft to Legazpi was moved to 10 a.m. from 5 a.m.

Janet and I—and two volunteer doctors, retired Col. Pablo Viray, and Cesar Culas—will have to wait until 10 a.m. to board the aircraft that will still come from Mactan Air Base.

By the time Janet, Viray, Culas and myself get to Daraga from the Legazpi City airport, it will be nightfall.

We still have to get two big trucks to transport the relief goods from the airport and transportation, I heard, is scarce in Bicol at this time.

Most of Janet's relatives—uncles, aunts, cousins and nephews—were swept away by floodwater that came rampaging down the slopes of Mayon Volcano. I decided to go with Janet because I used to live in Barangay Banag, Daraga, many years ago when I was an announcer for a local radio station; it's a sentimental journey for me.

I'd like to thank the Air Force, particularly its spokesperson, Maj. Augusto dela Peña, for the free passage for us and the relief goods. The Air Force is doing a great job, transporting relief items to flood-stricken areas despite being handicapped, having only two transport planes.

I'd like to thank my good friend, Dr. Viray, and Dr. Culas, whom I have asked to come with me to Daraga to attend to sick flood victims, and to my other friends who donated the goods that I'm taking with me to Daraga.

With their kind indulgence (although they wouldn't like it), I'm mentioning their names here: Freddie Lao, Willy So, Johnny Chua, John Joven, William Uy, Edith Caingles of St. Martin Pharmaceutical, Sebastian Chua, Alex Peñas and Lydia Nabong.

And, of course, my entire "Isumbong staff," who fetched the relief goods from their source, and Malou Sanchez, a former staffer now doing brisk business as party organizer.

Did you know

THE IMMACULATE Conception Academy used to be known as the Immaculate Conception Anglo-Chinese Academy. It was founded in 1936 by the Missionary Sisters of the Immaculate Conception, a Canadian congregation. Its first classes were held on top of a hardware store. The school transferred six times until it finally settled in San Juan, Metro Manila. Its mission is "to provide an integral Christian formation to Chinese-Filipino young women."

Cyril L. Bonabente, Inquirer Research

Clean air campaign launched by DENR

By Blanche S. Rivera

THE DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENT and Natural Resources yesterday launched "Huli Smoke," a campaign which aims to clean up the air in urban centers and improve air quality in Metro Manila by 30 percent.

The idea for the campaign was firmed up after 74 percent of all vehicles inspected by the government from January 2005 to April this year failed to meet emission standards, bolstering studies that motor vehicles were the primary cause of air pollution in the metropolis.

"We would like to inject a fresh perspective in engaging the public transport sector in this program," Environment Secretary Angelo T. Reyes said during the launch of "Huli Smoke" at the DENR central office.

"First, we acknowledge that bus, jeepney and tricycle drivers are victims of air pollution and as such, need help rather than harassment from unscrupulous law enforcers," he added.

The DENR cited a study conducted by the UP College of Public Health that showed 32 percent of jeepney drivers, 16.4 percent of air-conditioned bus drivers and 14.8 percent of commuters were affected with chronic obstructive pulmonary diseases (COPD).

During the program launching yesterday, Reyes and leaders of seven transport groups inked an agreement that would pave the way for a collaboration among transport operators, drivers and DENR officials in implementing the Clean Air Act.

"We're cooperating because we don't want to always be blamed for air pollution. We are not the problem. It's our engines," said Zeny Maranan, secretary general of the Federation of Jeepney Operators and Drivers Association of the Philippines (Fejodap).

Of the 29,193 diesel-fueled vehicles tested by antismoke belching units, 74 percent were apprehended for exceeding the emission capacity standards. This represents 2.62 percent of some 1.5 million vehicles in Metro Manila.

Boy Vargas of the Alliance of Transport Operators and Drivers Association of the Philippines (Altodap) said many vehicle owners would like to upgrade their engines but the cost was prohibitive. A new engine would cost up to P300,000 while an overhaul could require about P25,000.

As part of the "Huli Smoke" campaign, the DENR would find easy financing schemes for drivers and operators who want to improve their engines.

"The problem is that lending institutions in this country are collateral-oriented so we will dialogue with them and try to convince them to change this," Reyes said.

MetroBriefs

Fake paint cans

AGENTS of the National Bureau of Investigation (NBI) confiscated P3 million worth of cans intended to be used as containers for counterfeit Boysen paint in a Quezon City warehouse last week. Agents of the NBI Intellectual Property Rights Division (IPRD) headed by Jose Justo Yap seized the cans from a warehouse at 120 Sauyo Road, Sauyo, Novaliches, Quezon City after Pacific Paint, manufacturers of the paint brand, filed a complaint in the bureau. "The company told us that customers have been complaining about the proliferation of fake Boysen paint in the market," special investigator Christopher Hernandez of the NBI IPRD said. The raids were conducted on Nov. 29 and Nov. 30 by virtue of search warrants issued by Judge Reynaldo Ros of the Manila Regional Trial Court, Yap said. Seized during the raid were 61,000 pieces of empty 4-liter cans, a box of stickers bearing the brand trademark, 12 boxes of can handles, 50 boxes of can caps bearing the brand trademark, and 37 bundles of boxes.

Margaux C. Ortiz

RM Class '76 reunion

THE RAMON Magsaysay (Cubao) High School Class of 1976 will hold a reunion on Dec. 29 at the school grounds. Batch members from all sections are invited to sign up for the alumni directory, which is being compiled in preparation for the event. Alumni from the US, Canada, Europe and Asia are flying in for the occasion. For more information please call 0917-3434070, 0917-5308295, 0921-3666266 and 0917-3413217. Alumni may also join the batch's online discussion group by logging in at http://groups.yahoo.com/group/RMCHS_BATCH1976.

SO THAT ALL GOVERNMENT OFFICERS CONCERNED AND THE PUBLIC MAY KNOW

We would like to clarify certain misconceptions that may result in the provisions of the "Biofuels Act of 2006" which will be signed into law shortly that MTBE (methyl tertiary butyl ether) may be naturally harmful in any concentration.

Contrary to this inaccurate impression which may result from the wording of the impending law under the provision of Sections 4 and 12 which states: "harmful (gasoline) additives such as, but not limited to, MTBE", there has been no conclusive proof based on scientific studies that the gasoline component (not additive) is carcinogenic in the concentrations that they occur in fuels in the Philippines at 2% volume and even at 15% volume in Europe and other places.

Numerous government and world-renowned independent health organizations to date have found that there is no conclusive basis or compelling reason to classify MTBE as a possible cancer-causing agent for humans in any concentration that they are added to fuel. The following are the reports:

- The European Union Risk Assessment on MTBE concluded in December 2001 that MTBE is not a human carcinogen.
- The Department of Health & Human Services, National Toxicology Program voted in December 1998 not to list MTBE in its report on carcinogens (USA).
- The World Health Organization International Agency for Research on Cancer determined in November 1998 that MTBE is not classifiable as a human carcinogen.
- California Service Advisory Board for Proposition 65 determined in December 1998 that MTBE could not be considered carcinogenic or a developmental or reproductive toxicant (USA).
- Health and Environment Canada's Priority Substance Assessment Program has concluded that the predicted concentrations of MTBE in the environment in Canada do not constitute a danger to the environment, or to the environment on which human life depends, or to human life or health. MTBE is not considered as "toxic" according to the definition in Canadian legislation.
- The Northeast State for Coordinated Air Use Management in October 1998 in fact determined that RFG with MTBE reduced cancer risk by as much as 20 percent (USA).

For all the reasons above, MTBE is allowed to be used in EU, China, Japan, South Korea, Taiwan, US, Middle East, Singapore and many others.

Our client understands the Philippines' concern to prevent future hazardous contamination by any harmful additive to gasoline, but these concerns should be based on solid scientific evidence in order not to unnecessarily disrupt the availability of gasoline supply at reasonable prices.

Although we agree that harmful gasoline additives should be phased out, we respectfully disagree that MTBE should conclusively be singled out as one in the absence of any compelling or sufficient basis to name it as such.

Based on more than 20 years of European MTBE usage, it was concluded in the EU Assessment Report in 2001 that MTBE is neither carcinogenic nor toxic. MTBE's economic, environmental, and health benefits in fact far outweigh its unfounded impression. This position has been brought to the attention of parties concerned early, which resulted in the deletion of MTBE as a presumably harmful additive.

Should there be conclusive proof that MTBE is hazardous, we will not only recommend a phase-out but also removal of the same from the market.

We emphasize that our client supports the purpose of the Biofuels Act and wishes its success as it will benefit the people of the Philippines.

ATTY. REYNALDO R. PRINCESA
Legal Counsel for an
International Client

WOO-Clarence-InquirerNotice-12082006

ADVT.

17 families lose homes in Marikina compound

By Edson C. Tandoc Jr.

TEN HOUSES WERE RAZED WHEN A SMALL FIRE BROKE out in a crowded residential area in Marikina City early yesterday.

Nobody was hurt but the fire razed more than P900,000 worth of valuables, Marikina City fire chief Antonio Razal told the INQUIRER.

The fire began in one of the houses inside the Guevarra Compound in Barangay Fortune about 12:45 a.m. Because adjacent houses were all made of light materials, the fire quickly spread, destroying at least six houses. Four houses were also partially damaged by the fire, investigators said.

Razal said electricity lines in the house where the fire began had long been cut and the family had been using an extension cord plugged in the house of a neighbor almost 30 meters away. The fire could have started when part of the cord suddenly sparked, Razal also said, citing initial investigation. The fire left at least 17 families homeless.

OSG lawyer, son shot dead

By Jocelyn R. Uy

A LAWYER WORKING FOR THE OFFICE OF the Solicitor General and his son were gunned down by two unidentified armed men in Parañaque City yesterday morning.

City police chief Supt. Ronald Estilles identified the victims as 57-year-old Nestor Ballocillo and his son Benedict, 23.

The two were on their way to the older Ballocillo's office in Makati City before heading to Subic for a seminar when two armed men cornered them in front of a donut stand and a pawnshop on Hernandez Avenue, Valley 1 in Barangay San Antonio at around 7 a.m.

"It looks like the incident was a setup. The suspects might have waited for the victims somewhere," said PO3 Pio Calvo, case investigator.

Initial investigation showed that both victims were shot in the head at close range.

Scene of the crime operatives recovered three spent shells of a .45-cal pistol from the site.

Ballocillo's brief case, which reportedly contained important documents, was missing after the incident.

Estilles told the INQUIRER that the killing might have something to do with one of the cases the lawyer recently handled, including the Piatco controversy. Ballocillo was one of the solicitor general's 15 assistants.

'3G' trains to serve LRTA riders . . .

From page A19

Apart from the acquisition of the 3G trains, the expansion project also includes major renovations at the Edsa and Doroteo Jose stations, where escalators, elevators and a cross-over bridge (from the D. Jose station of LRT Line 1 to the Recto station of LRT Line 2) are being built.

Renovations and improvements for both LRT lines will be completed on March 2007.

Robles also said the expansion is just the first phase in the implementation of the government's long-term goal of having an interconnected loop of railway networks.

In line with this goal, the 3G trains will enable the LRT Line 1 to extend its operation up to the Metrostar Express' North Edsa station by May 2010. The LRTA will focus on the P120-million project beginning January.

The other LRTA project is the Line 1 extension from Baclaran to Bacoor, Cavite. Letters of intent are now being collected for this project pending approval by the National Economic Development Authority.

Santa cops make sure malls safe for Yule shoppers

By Jocelyn R. Uy

ABOUT A HUNDRED POLICEMEN IN THE country's financial capital played Santa yesterday, mingling with shoppers in different malls to make sure that the naughty—pickpockets, snatchers and thieves—would stay away from the nice.

Makati police chief Supt. Gilbert Cruz told reporters that the "Santa cops" program was a precautionary measure against untoward incidents that might occur during the Christmas season.

At the program launching yesterday, four policemen clad in Santa's red suit and white beard gave away bags of candies to children inside a mall. They also had a gift for parents: about 500 DVDs containing a documentary on the different modus operandi used by criminals to victimize shoppers.

"We are doing this because we want to spread the spirit of Christmas and the value of giving," Cruz told the INQUIRER yesterday.

Cruz said Santa cops will be deployed in 10 malls in Makati City to ensure the safety of the public. Six policemen manning the police assistance centers set up in these commercial establishments will augment the "Christmas Gang."

Each mall will have four policemen wearing full Santa suits. They will be backed up by 20 others sporting Santa hats, said Chief Insp. Manny Santos, Makati's chief of the Investigation and Intelligence Division.

"We are launching this program so we can closely monitor criminal elements and properly protect and secure people expected to troop to the malls at this time," said Supt. Vic Loares, deputy chief police.

Cruz launched the same project in San Juan in 1994 when he was still its police chief. He said the project helped significantly in preventing crimes and untoward incidents in commercial establishments during the holidays.

"It is a good thing that they are doing this. We feel safer," said Jojo Justiniano, 38, who brought his daughter to the mall yesterday.

The National Capital Region Police Office, meanwhile, also launched its Task Group Motorized Anti-Street Crimes Operatives, composed of 200 policemen who would be patrolling the metropolis' busy streets on their brand-new motorcycles.

"But the task force is not intended only for this Christmas season. It will be a permanent group helping our SWAT (Special Weapons and Tactics) team and mobile patrolmen deter street crimes," said Senior Supt. Agrimero Cruz Jr., chief of the NCRPO community relations division.

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Venezuela's Chavez vows socialism launch

CARACAS—NEWLY RE-ELECTED President Hugo Chavez on Tuesday reiterated his determination to launch revolutionary socialism in Venezuela, and cast doubts over US calls to bury the hatchet after years of verbal confrontation.

"Venezuelans didn't vote for me, they voted for a socialist project," the firebrand leftist said after the National Electoral Council (CNE) formally declared him re-elected with 62.89 percent of the votes.

"The path of this republic is a revolution, a democratic revolution, a social revolution, a political revolution, an economic revolution," Chavez told invited guests, as supporters cheered outside the CNE building.

Chavez, who has gained iconic status among US bashers during his eight years in office, had harsh words for the US administration when he spoke to journalists after the ceremony.

"If the United States wants dialogue, Venezuela will always keep the door open. But I doubt they are sincere in this," Chavez said during his first news conference since Sunday's presidential election.

"It is possible to talk to the devil, but you need human strength," said Chavez, who had likened US President George W. Bush to Satan before the UN General Assembly in September.

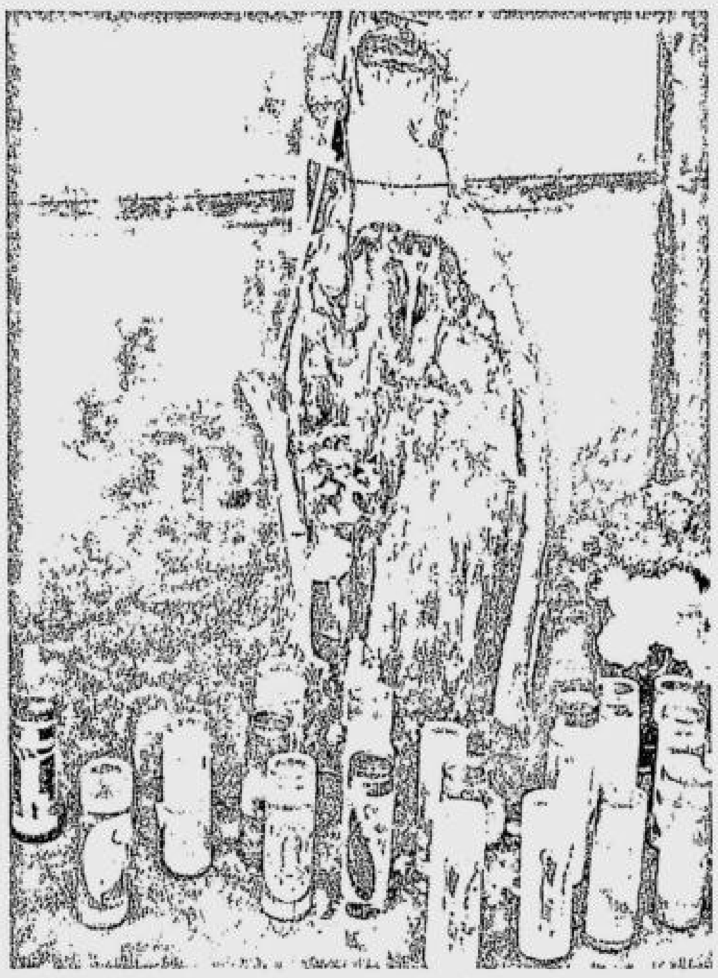
"How will we have good relations with a government that has financed illegal conspiracies here," he said. Chavez has claimed US authorities were implicated in a 2002 coup that ousted him for two days, and backed other efforts to remove him from office.

Washington was conciliatory, with US State Department spokesman Sean McCormack saying on Monday the United States "would like to be able to work with Venezuela across a full spectrum of various issues," and stressing "there don't have to be any frictions." US ambassador to Venezuela William Brownfield told a local radio station a "process of communication" got under way on Monday between the two governments.

Despite years of tension between the two countries, Venezuela exports about half its daily production of more than three million barrels a day of crude oil to the United States.

Chavez, who during his campaign called his electoral rival a "lackey of the US empire," on Tuesday saluted what he termed "the responsible and serious opposition." After running for a myriad of opposition parties, state governor Manuel Rosales acknowledged defeat on Sunday, when he trailed Chavez by more than 23 points.

A former paratrooper who once led a failed coup, Chavez, 52, was first elected in 1998 and again in 2000 following a constitutional amendment that extended the presidential term from five to six years. *AFP*



MARIAN IMAGE. Many Roman Catholics believe they see an image of the Virgin Mary in this tree stump in Passaic, N.J., shown Tuesday, Dec. 5. AP

5 Marines face raps for killings

WASHINGTON—AT LEAST FIVE Marines are expected to be charged, possibly as early as Wednesday, with the killing of 24 Iraqis, many of them unarmed women and children, in the village of Haditha in November 2005, according to a Marine official and a lawyer involved in the case.

The charges are expected to range from negligent homicide to murder, said a senior Pentagon official familiar with the military's nearly nine-month investigation into the episode. Several Marines from the 3rd Platoon of Company K, 3rd Battalion, 1st Marine Regiment, are accused of killing the villagers after a roadside explosion killed one of their comrades.

Charges could also be brought against an additional one or two Marines, the Marine official said, including one officer who was in the vicinity of the killings but did not participate in them.

Though it was nearly certain that Marines would be charged with crimes for the killings, exactly when the charges would be made official was unclear, military officials and defense lawyers involved in the case said. But they said charges could closely follow a closed-door briefing by Lt. Gen. Richard F. Natonski, the Marine Corps deputy commandant for plans. policies and operations, to the House Armed Services Committee on Wednesday morning.

That briefing will relate the findings of a military inquiry into how the Marine Corps managed its investigation of the slayings, which began with an inquiry in March, four months after the killings occurred, the Pentagon official said. Aides to committee members said that Marine officials promised a confidential briefing before any charges were announced. *New York Times News Service*

Indonesia to widen polygamy ban

JAKARTA—INDONESIA IS CONsidering banning ministers, lawmakers and other government officials from practicing polygamy after the country's most popular Islamic preacher took a second wife, sparking renewed debate about the practice.

There are no plans to outlaw polygamy all together in the world's most populous Muslim nation.

Currently, men are only allowed to have a second wife if his first is an invalid, terminally ill or infertile. The regulation, however, is rarely enforced and most commentators say the practice is becoming more common.

Woman's Affairs Minister Meutia Hatta said Tuesday that a 1983 law forbidding civil servants from polygamy — passed by then-dictator Suharto, reportedly under pressure from his wife — could be expanded to included ministers, parliamentarians and governors, among others.

The move comes after charismatic preacher and television personality, Aa Gym, who had a strong female following and often preached about family values, announced that he had taken a second wife.

The preacher's move has been discussed extensively on gossip shows and in magazines, with the coverage uniformly negative, and female activists and liberal Islamic clerics have expressed disappointment.

Islam permits a man to have four wives, though some Muslim countries ban or prohibit the practice.

No statistics are kept on how common polygamy is in Indonesia, though with the downfall of dictator Suharto in 1998 the practice has become more open.

Banning polygamy outright would likely face opposition from conservatives, who would see the move as a further secularization of Indonesia, where 90 percent of the 220 million people are Muslim.

Bin Laden more symbol than threat, says Gates

WASHINGTON—AL QAIDA LEADer Osama bin Laden has become more of a symbol than an active plotter of attacks against the United States, US defense secretary nominee Robert Gates said on Tuesday.

"I think that his ability to directly organize and plan the kind of attacks against us that hurt us so badly in September of 2001 is very limited now," Gates told the Senate Armed Services Committee, which was considering his nomination.

Gates was expected to win US Senate confirmation to replace Donald Rumsfeld as defense secretary.

"I have no doubt that our forces have been trying their best to find Osama bin Laden," he said. There have been several unconfirmed rumors that the Saudi-born al Qaida chief was ill or dead.

Asked who he believed was the greater threat to the United States since the Sept. 11 attacks, Saddam Hussein or Osama bin Laden, Gates replied, "Osama bin Laden." Bin Laden, the mastermind behind the plan to fly commercial airplanes into the World Trade Center and the Pentagon in 2001, will likely be turned in by one of his own people, Gates said, in similar way to how US forces caught Iraqi leader Saddam Hussein. *Reuters*

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THE INQUIRER

THAI Foreign Minister Nitya Pibulsonggram (left) shakes hands with US embassador to Thailand, Ralph L. Boyce in front of the first tsunami warning buoy at the Cape Panwa in Phuket island in Thailand. AFP

Another tsunami could hit Indonesia, experts say

WASHINGTON—ANOTHER BIG tsunami could hit Sumatra within the next few decades, flooding densely populated regions south of where a giant wave hit in December 2004, US and Indonesian researchers predicted on Tuesday.

The same big geologic fault, called a megathrust, that caused the 2004 tsunami continues to run parallel to the southeast, along the Indian Ocean coast of Sumatra, with the potential to affect areas to the south, the team at the California Institute of Technology, the University of Southern California and elsewhere reported.

Pressure is building and it could move at any time, they said.

"Potential losses could be as great as those that occurred in Aceh in 2004," the researchers wrote in their report, published in this week's issue of the Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences.

Movements along this section caused two big quakes and tsunamis in 1797 and 1833, the researchers reported. They used a combination of history and geology to predict what might happen again.

"When we tell people living along this 700-kilometer section of the Sumatran coast that they will likely experience a big tsunami within the next 30 years, they ask for details," said Kerry Sieh, a professor of geology at Caltech who has studied many earthquakes in the region.

"How much time after the earthquake will they have before the tsunami strikes? How big will the waves be? How far inland should they be prepared to run? What areas are likely to suffer tsunami damage?" Sieh asked.

"This paper is our first attempt to answer these important questions." A monster quake of magnitude 9.1 in December 2004 just off Sumatra's coast caused a tsunami that crossed the Indian Ocean to Sri Lanka, Thailand and even Africa's coast. More than 230,000 people died or disappeared in a dozen countries in the devastation.

Sieh's team has reported on several potential quake zones, based on measurements of the sea floor and known faults. The area is prone to geologic activity and big quakes are frequent—and frequently fatal.

In this week's report, they said they studied samples of coral from the islands that show how much previous quakes have lifted the sea floor.

Offshore islands may shield Sumatra's city of Padang somewhat, but in 1797 the tsunami was reported to have carried a 200-ton English ship into the town, they said.

"The population of Padang in 1797 and 1833 was a few thousand," Sieh said in a statement.

"Now it is about 800,000, and most of it is within a few meters of sea level. We hope that these initial results will help focus educational efforts, emergency preparedness activities, and changes in the basic infrastructure of cities and towns along the Sumatran coast." Countries likely to be affected are installing warning systems. Last week Thailand launched the first of 22 US-made tsunami-detection buoys, and the next buoy will go off Sumatra's coast.

Reuters

Cubans kept in the dark about Castro's condition

HAVANA—Government posters say "Fidel Castro for ever" and "80 years more," but Cubans now doubt their bearded leader will again govern their country.

More and more suspect he is close to death, even though they have been told little about his condition, a closely guarded state secret, other than that he underwent emergency surgery to stop intestinal bleeding in July and is recovering.

"It's strange they have not said anything about Fidel," said Orlando, a telephone company worker and government backer who, like most Cubans, declined to give his full name. "They must have their reasons, but I'm worried. It has been a long time since we heard about him," he said on Tuesday.

Castro's absence from a military parade on Saturday to celebrate his 80th birthday convinced many the revolutionary icon is so gravely ill that he will not return to power. The celebration was originally scheduled for Castro's actual birthday in August but delayed due to his surgery.

Cubans, government supporters or not, turned on their television sets early on Saturday to see if Castro would show up at the parade or at least get word about his condition.

But there was no mention of the leader other than a cursory "Viva Fidel" at the end of a speech by his brother and designated successor, acting President Raul Castro.

"People are convinced he has cancer," said Joel, a young social worker. "We all expected to see him at the parade, and nobody said a word." As recently as Friday, Vice President Carlos Lage insisted Fidel Castro would be back to lead Cubans for years to come. He spoke at the end of a conference on Castro's place in history that sounded more like a farewell than a birthday party.

"We have no idea what is going on. Everything is a mystery," said Orestes, waiting out the rain in a central Havana butcher shop that had no meat for sale, only eggs.

"It has been too many years of disinformation," he said.

The US State Department said it assumed that Castro, who led Cuba since a 1959 revolution, was in serious condition.

"He did not appear at his birthday celebration and one can only assume that he (Castro) would have to be in quite serious condition to have missed that," State Department spokesperson Sean McCormack said on Tuesday.

The last time Cubans saw their leader was in a video on Oct. 28 that shocked the nation with images of a frail and shuffling Castro.

Cubans are accustomed to being told very little about the inner workings of their government on security grounds because their country is said to be under constant threat from its arch-enemy the United States.

But dissidents say uncertainty over the country's political future now that it is clear Fidel Castro is too ill to govern has fueled impatience with the secrecy surrounding his health.

"People are annoyed. They suspect the government is hiding the truth. They feel they are being fooled," said Manuel Cuesta Morua, leader of Arco Progresista, a small opposition group.

Reuters

World's wealth concentrated in few

EXPERTS HAVE LONG WORRIED about the skewed distribution of the world's income, with vast rewards massing in the hands of a wealthy elite and precious little left over for the vast majority of the global population.

But even as income inequality has reached near record levels in many countries, the distribution of the world's wealth, things like stocks, bonds or physical assets like land, has become even more narrowly concentrated than income, according to a new report by the World Institute for Development Economics Research of the UN University.

In 2000, the top 1 percent of the world's population, some 37 million adults with a net worth of at least $515,000, accounted for about 40 percent of the world's total net worth, according to the report.

The bottom half of the population owned merely 1.1 percent of the globe's wealth. The net worth of the world's typical person—whose wealth was above that of half the world's population and below that of the other half—was under $2,200.

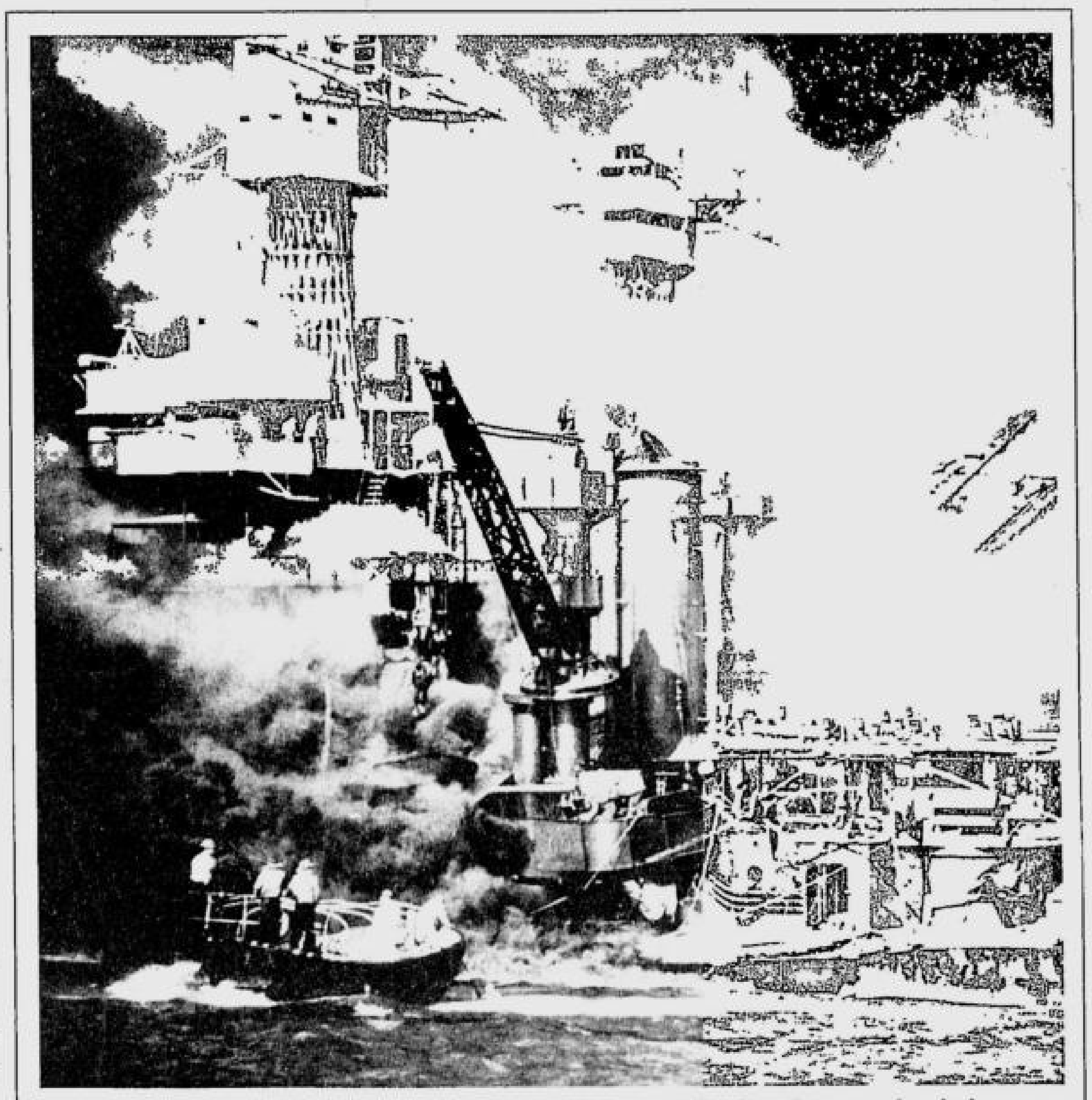
The widening gap between the global haves and the have-nots in large measure reflects the failure of less-developed countries to develop, while rich countries—particularly the United States—have experienced fast economic growth and a spectacular buildup of assets.

Global inequality in wealth may well be somewhat lower today. The data in the report is 6 years old. Fast growth and wealth accumulation in China and India since 2000 are likely to have closed the average gap between the rich world and the poor.

Income inequality shows few signs of abating in most countries. Still, there is evidence that the global gap in wealth may close somewhat over coming years. Paradoxically, the reason is the fast growth of China and India.

Inequality is growing rapidly in both those countries. As tens of millions of Chinese and Indians climb out of poverty, they are leaving tens of millions of less fortunate Chinese and Indians behind.

New York Times News Service



DAY OF INFAMY. A small boat rescues a USS West Virginia crew member from the water after the Japanese bombing of Pearl Harbor, Hawaii on Dec. 7, 1941 during World War II. The mast of the USS Tennessee is beyond the burning West Virginia. On Dec. 7, 1941, Japanese Imperial Navy navigator Takeshi Maeda guided his Kate bomber to Pearl Harbor and fired a torpedo that helped sink the USS West Virginia. AP

Chile's Pinochet recovering

SANTIAGO—FORMER DICTATOR Augusto Pinochet was recovering in hospital from a weekend heart attack as his daughter declared Tuesday he would not apologize for murders and torture blamed on his regime.

"At this time we can say that the critical stage has passed," attending physician Juan Ignacio Vergara told reporters 48 hours after Pinochet, 91, underwent a delicate heart operation.

"He is in his room with no external aids and eats normally," Vergara said. "He is well, conscious and talking." However, Vergara added that Pinochet's "advanced age" will keep him in the hospital's cardiac care unit for now.

Pinochet was rushed to hospital early Sunday after a heart attack at home, while under house arrest in connection with human rights charges during his 1973-1990 reign.

A priest was called in and administered last rites, reserved for the ill near death.

An angioplasty cleared a blocked artery that same day, and he improved by Monday.

Vergara said Pinochet's condition was aggravated by his age and poor health, including diabetes, while some in Chile speculated that reports of Pinochet's condition was exaggerated.

Pinochet's oldest daughter, Lucia Pinochet Hiriart, told Chileans not to expect a deathbed apology from him.

"My father believes asking for forgiveness is a political thing, and he is not going to do it," she told state-owned Television National.

On his birthday, Nov. 25, Pinochet said he accepted "full political responsibility for everything that has been done" under his rule, and "held no grudge" over his family's legal troubles. But did not apologize.

Chileans remain deeply divided over Pinochet's 17 year dictatorship, when 3,000 people were tortured and murdered, according to official count. His death would end years of efforts to bring him to justice.

AFP

4,000-year-old doctor's mummy found in Egypt

CAIRO—EGYPTIAN ARchaeologists have discovered the funerary remains of a doctor who lived more than 4,000 years ago, including his mummy, sarcophagus and bronze surgical instruments.

The upper part of the tomb was discovered in 2000 at Saqqara, 20 kilometers south of Cairo, and the sarcophagus came to light in the burial pit during cleaning work, state news agency MENA said on Tuesday, quoting Egyptian government antiquities chief Zahi Hawass.

The doctor, whose name was Qar, lived under the 6th dynasty and built his tomb near Egypt's first pyramid. The 6th dynasty ruled from about 2350 to 2180 BC.

Hawass said the lid of the wooden sarcophagus had excellent and well-preserved decoration and the mummy itself was in ideal condition. "The linen wrappings and the funerary drawings on the mummy are still as they were," he said.

"The mask which covers the face of the mummy is in an amazing state of preservation in spite of slight damage in the area of the mouth." The tomb also had earthenware containers bearing the doctor's name, a round limestone offering table and 22 bronze statues of gods.

Reuters

Discovery prepares for blast-off

CAPE CANAVERAL, FLA.—THE space shuttle Discovery is to begin a complex 11-day round trip to the International Space Station as early as Thursday night, lighting up the skies in the first nighttime launching in four years.

If the weather and technology cooperate, the shuttle and its crew of seven astronauts will be launched just before 9:36 p.m. The fiery blastoff should be visible along much of the Eastern Seaboard.

No technical problems that would delay the mission have been announced, and the likelihood of favorable weather is 70 percent, Katherine A. Winters, Nasa's shuttle launch weather officer, told reporters on Tuesday.

The last nighttime launching was in November 2002, two months before the ill-fated mission of the shuttle Columbia. Foam debris shed during the Columbia's liftoff punched a hole in a wing, allowing superheated gases to enter the craft and break it apart when it reentered earth's atmosphere 16 days later.

Since then, shuttles have been launched in daylight so cameras can capture detailed images of any liftoff debris. Now, Nasa managers say they are confident that they have learned enough from those images and that other sensors will provide them with any data they need.

Only two members of the Discovery's crew—the commander, Mark L. Polansky, a former Air Force test pilot, and Robert L. Curbeam, a captain in the Navy—have been to space before. It will be the first trip to space for the rest of the crew: William A. Oefelein, the pilot and a commander in the Navy; Sunita Williams, a Navy commander; Nicholas J.M. Patrick; Joan Higginbotham; and Christer Fuglesang, the first Swedish astronaut and a representative of the European Space Agency.

The shuttle will leave Williams on the space station for a six-month stay and bring Thomas Reiter of the European Space Agency back to earth.

This 20th mission to the station involves significant challenges, mission managers say. Astronauts will add a small structural truss to the orbiting laboratory and reconfigure the station's electrical system to begin drawing power from arrays of solar panels that were added on the last mission.

New York Times News Service

The WORLD

Editor **Luverne B. Gueco**

Fiji military rounds up coup opponents

SUVA—ARMED SOLDIERS FLEW DEPOSED FIJI Prime Minister Laisenia Qarase out of the capital Suva on Wednesday as the military began rounding up opponents of its takeover and declared a state of emergency.

As domestic and international support swung behind Qarase, soldiers began detaining key public servants and then moved into the parliamentary complex and interrupted a Senate session as it debated a motion condemning the takeover.

In a Ministry of Information statement seen by Reuters, the state of emergency authorized cordons around Suva, possible curfews and the return of reservists to camp "to take the country towards good governance, rid us of corruption and bad practices."

Qarase called on Fijians to stand up for democracy and expects nonviolent demonstrations against the military within days. Hundreds of Fijians rallied outside Qarase's Suva home after the coup on Tuesday.

"My assessment is that about 99 percent of our population wants democracy. We are used to that system of government, we want to live under the rule of law and we are fed up with illegal takeovers in our country," he told Australian radio.

Australia and New Zealand have called for people power to restore democracy to Fiji.

"I think the ordinary people of Fiji and the institutions of government in Fiji should show passive resistance to this imposition of dictatorship on their country," Australian Foreign Minister Alexander Downer told the Australian parliament.

Military chief Commander Frank Bainimarama staged a bloodless coup after a year-long struggle with Qarase, whom he accuses of being too soft on those behind Fiji's last coup in 2000.

The military chief has appointed a caretaker prime minister and said an interim administration would prepare Fiji for fresh elections, but has given no timetable.

The military takeover has been condemned around the world and is expected to have catastrophic effects on Fiji's delicate economy, which is based on tourism and an outdated sugar industry. Fiji's three earlier coups devastated the economy.

Fiji's central bank has tightened foreign exchange transactions fearful of a currency run, said Fiji media.

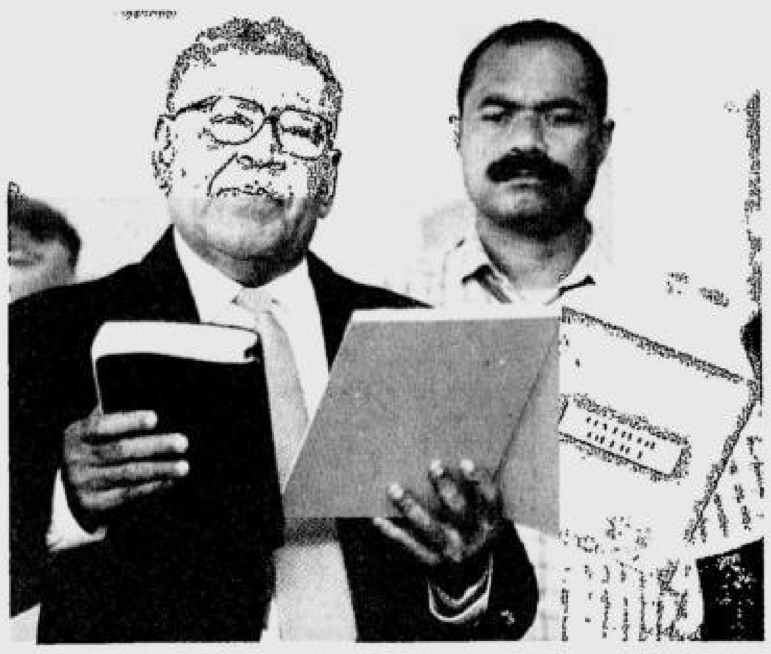
The bank said last month that political uncertainty in Fiji had "seriously undermined efforts to stabilize the economy, let alone pursue further growth," reported Fiji media.

Soldiers started to round up people on Wednesday they thought might oppose them, including the speaker of parliament and Fiji's acting police commissioner, and took them to the country's main military barracks in the capital Suva.

Senators in the Fijian parliament moved a motion on Wednesday condemning the coup, but before they could vote the sitting was interrupted by soldiers and the Senate adjourned.

"There is a coup culture which pervades this land," said Senator Tupeni Baba in moving the motion.

Reuters



CARETAKER Prime Minister Jona Senilagakali holds a bible and reads the Oath of Office at his swearing in ceremony in the officer's mess at Queen Elizabeth Barracks in the nation's capital Suva Dec. 6.

Iraqi PM calls for peace talks

BAGHDAD—PRIME MINISTER Nuri al-Maliki called Tuesday for Iraq's bitterly divided factions to attend peace talks, after a day of violent attacks against Shiite targets left dozens dead.

Maliki's call came as the US military announced an accelerated plan to transfer command and control of Iraq's fledgling security forces to the prime minister's embattled government by the middle of next year.

Both decisions came on the eve of the much-anticipated release of a report commissioned by US President George W. Bush into US strategy in Iraq, but only served to underline how much it has already been overtaken by events.

"We will hold a conference for political parties and entities this month," Maliki told reporters in Baghdad. "We will agree on a charter of honor to end the shedding of Iraqi blood and the sectarian conflict.

"We have agreed with the leaders taking part in the government that we will strengthen the government of national unity and its activities through a ministerial reshuffle comprising a number of ministries," he added.

"For the sake of protecting the citizens, the government will work to build up the armed forces as quickly as possible to take over full security responsibility in all the provinces," he promised.

More than three-and-a-half years after a US invasion overthrew Saddam Hussein, the country is engulfed in a vicious sectarian war between factions of the Shiite majority and the once-dominant Sunnis.

Scores of Iraqis are killed every day in insurgent bombings, assassinations by shadowy death squads, sectarian massacre and crossfire between US forces and rebel groups, including those fighting under the al-Qaida banner.

US public opinion and the congressional majority has turned against the war amid mounting American casualties, and Bush and Maliki are both under intense pressure to find a way to curb a rising tide of bloodshed.

Major General William Caldwell, spokesperson for the US-led coalition in Iraq, on Tuesday unveiled the details of a security agreement which the beleaguered leaders struck last week in Amman.

AFP

US not winning in Iraq, says defense nominee Gates

WASHINGTON—DEFENSE SECretary designate Robert Gates said Tuesday the United States is not winning the war in Iraq and warned of the risk of a "regional conflagration" unless the situation improves.

A wave of bipartisan support carried Gates through his confirmation hearing before the Senate Armed Services Committee, which voted unanimously to endorse him after hours of testimony.

The full Senate is to begin debating his nomination on Wednesday. If confirmed, as expected, Gates will replace Donald Rumsfeld as defense secretary at the lowest point in the United States's most divisive and difficult war since Vietnam.

"Our course over the next year or two will determine whether the American and Iraqi people and the next president of the United States will face a slowly but steadily improving situation in Iraq and in the region or will face the very real risk and possible reality of a regional conflagration," Gates said.

GATES AP

"We need to work together to develop a strategy that does not leave Iraq in chaos and that protects our long-term interests in and hopes for the region," he said.

Gates rejected military action against Iran or Syria except as "an absolute last resort" and urged open channels of communications despite the negative role they have played in Iraq.

Senators from both sides of the aisles praised Gates for his candor with Democrats calling it a welcome change from the combative Rumsfeld.

Gates said he would take seriously the advice of US military leaders, who often were overshadowed or even publicly spurned by Rumsfeld, and to be forthright in making his own recommendations on Iraq.

A former director of the CIA and adviser to six presidents, Gates said he was not giving up a job he loved as president of Texas A and M University to be "a bump on the log and not say exactly what I think." Saying the war had become "very personal for all of us," Gates told how a woman approached him in a hotel dining room and said she had two sons in Iraq. "For God's sake, bring them home safe," Gates recalled her saying.

"Now, that's real pressure," Gates told the senators.

Gates, who until his nomination Nov. 8 served on a bipartisan panel devising recommendations on Iraq strategy, said the status quo in Iraq was unacceptable.

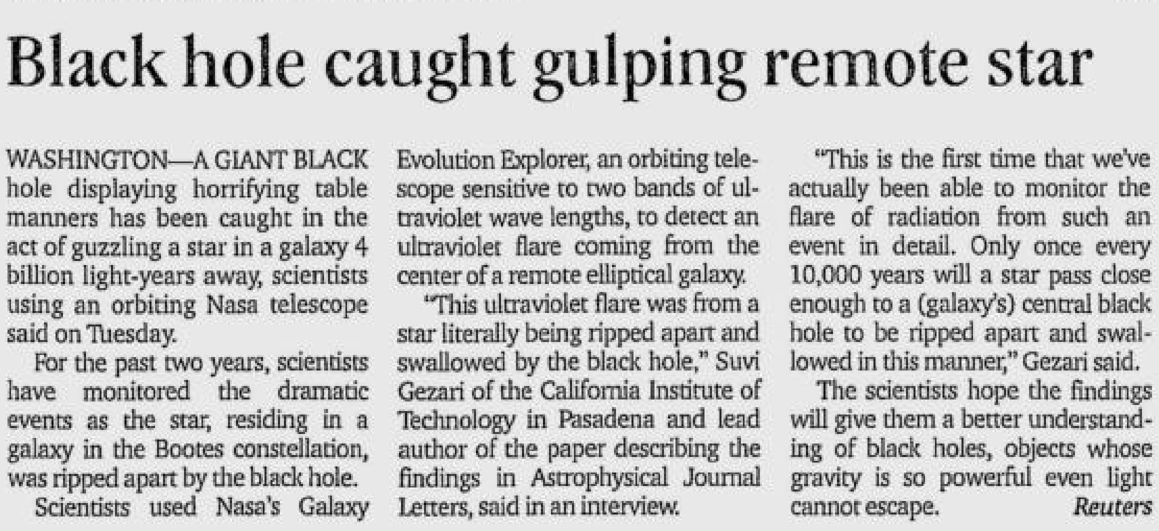
When asked whether he thought the United States is currently winning in Iraq, he said, "No, sir." He agreed that Iraqi political leaders should be pressured to settle their differences, but gave no clear indication whether he favored reducing US combat forces or bringing in more to tamp down the violence.

"It's my impression that, frankly, there are no new ideas on Iraq," he said. "The list of tactics, the list of strategies, the list of approaches, is pretty much out there.

"And the question is: Is there a way to put pieces of those different proposals together in a way that provides a path forward." He said he expected the administration to move with "considerable urgency," and he planned to consult US commanders and other officials on a course of action as soon as he is confirmed by the Senate, possibly as early as this week.

On Bush's commitment to keep troops in Iraq as long as it takes, Gates said there would have to be a US presence for a long time but "with a dramatically smaller number of US forces than are there today." Bush's remarks do not imply "that we will be there at the level of force we have or doing the things that we are doing in a major combat way for the indefinite future," he said.

AFP



SPACE FEEDING FRENZY. This artist's concept shows a supermassive black hole at the center of a remote galaxy digesting the remnants of a star. AFP

Black hole caught gulping remote star

WASHINGTON—A GIANT BLACK hole displaying horrifying table manners has been caught in the act of guzzling a star in a galaxy 4 billion light-years away, scientists using an orbiting Nasa telescope said on Tuesday.

For the past two years, scientists have monitored the dramatic events as the star, residing in a galaxy in the Bootes constellation, was ripped apart by the black hole.

Scientists used Nasa's Galaxy Evolution Explorer, an orbiting telescope sensitive to two bands of ultraviolet wave lengths, to detect an ultraviolet flare coming from the center of a remote elliptical galaxy.

"This ultraviolet flare was from a star literally being ripped apart and swallowed by the black hole," Suvi Gezari of the California Institute of Technology in Pasadena and lead author of the paper describing the findings in Astrophysical Journal Letters, said in an interview.

"This is the first time that we've actually been able to monitor the flare of radiation from such an event in detail. Only once every 10,000 years will a star pass close enough to a (galaxy's) central black hole to be ripped apart and swallowed in this manner," Gezari said.

The scientists hope the findings will give them a better understanding of black holes, objects whose gravity is so powerful even light cannot escape.

Reuters

Paris talks fail to reach deal on Iran sanctions

PARIS—SIX WORLD POWERS meeting in Paris Tuesday said they had failed to agree what sanctions to impose over Iran's refusal to halt sensitive nuclear work, as diplomats said that Russia was blocking a deal.

Top diplomats from the five veto-wielding UN Security Council members—Britain, China, France, Russia and the United States—plus Germany and a European Union envoy, took part in the talks.

"We made substantive progress on the scope of the sanctions, targeting proliferation sensitive activities," the French foreign ministry, which hosted the meeting, said in a statement afterwards.

"We are now close to a conclusion of this process," it added, but said there were still "several outstanding issues." "The next step will be in New York," it said, in a reference to the headquarters of the United Nations, without specifying when the next round of talks would take place.

The six powers are trying to agree what economic sanctions to impose on Iran for ignoring a UN deadline of Aug. 31 to stop enriching uranium—which outside powers fear could be used to make nuclear weapons.

Moscow and Beijing—who have strong economic interests in Iran—have tried to water down a draft UN Security Council resolution drawn up by France, Britain and Germany, while Washington wants to beef the text up.

The European draft would bar trade with Iran in goods related to its nuclear and ballistic missile programs and impose financial and travel restrictions on persons and agencies involved.

According to diplomats in Paris, Russia—though willing to back the trade ban—is still opposed to sanctions being applied to individuals.

Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov said earlier Tuesday that Moscow would support a ban on shipments of sensitive goods but said broader sanctions would be counter-productive.

"We believe it is necessary to approve the proposal on forbidding deliveries of technology, material and services in the field of uranium enrichment, chemical processing of radioactive fuel, and heavy-water technology to Iran from abroad," he was quoted as saying by Ria Novosti news agency.

He criticized "our Western partners" for supporting the adoption of wide-reaching sanctions that are "not proportionate" to the monitoring capacity of the International Atomic Energy Agency.

"Such a wholesale approach to banning cooperation with Iran in various spheres will only exacerbate the situation," he said.

AFP

Russia won't extradite possible suspects in spy case to Britain

MOSCOW—RUSSIA'S TOP PROSecutor said Moscow would not extradite possible Russian suspects in the poisoning of ex-agent Alexander Litvinenko to Britain, and warned that visiting British detectives would only be allowed to listen as their Russian counterparts collect testimony.

Yuri Chaika said Tuesday that, under Russian law, a Russian citizen who is accused of committing a crime abroad must face trial at home.

"If they want to arrest citizens of the Russian Federation, it would be impossible because of the Russian Constitution," Chaika told reporters.

Litvinenko, 43, died Nov. 23 in London. Toxicologists found polonium-210, a rare radioactive substance, in his body.

In a deathbed accusation, Litvinenko blamed President Vladimir Putin for the poisoning. The Kremlin has vehemently denied the accusations.

Chaika said that his office would fully cooperate with a team of British investigators who arrived in Moscow Monday to collect information on Litvinenko's death.

At the same time, he said that all figures in the case whom the British investigators wanted to interrogate would be questioned by Russian ,prosecutors in the presence of the British officers.

"It is we who are doing all the interrogating. They only attend that, it cannot be otherwise" in Russia, Chaika said.

Chaika also confirmed that a potential central figure in the case, another former Russian agent who met with Litvinenko in London on Nov. 1—the day Litvinenko believed he was poisoned—was in a hospital.

Chaika said the British officers could be allowed to visit Andrei Lugovoi and listen to him being interrogated by Russian prosecutors, if doctors permit that.

"He's being treated in a hospital," Chaika said. "Everything will depend on the doctors' opinion. If doctors allow a conversation with him, he will be questioned."

Lugovoi told the ITAR-Tass news agency that he was undergoing special tests for possible radiation contamination, and that the results would be ready in a few days.

He said he was prepared to answer all the British investigators' questions.

"I intend to fully satisfy their interest and am waiting for an invitation from the law enforcement organs," he was quoted as saying.

"Once I give all the necessary testimony to the law enforcement organs, I intend to publicly put an end to (speculation) about my supposed involvement in this story that has caused such a stir," he said.

Lugovoi traveled to London three times over the month before Litvinenko's death and met with Litvinenko four times, according to Russian media.

AP

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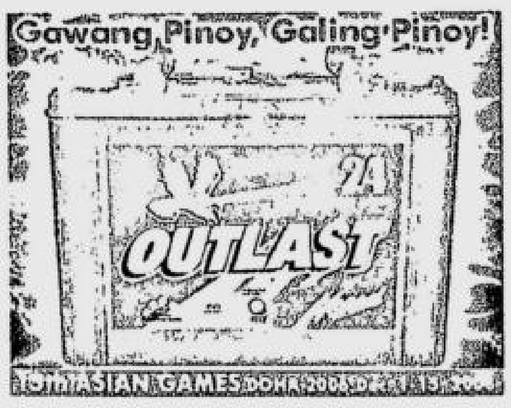
15TH ASIAN GAMES
DOHA 2006



Cue artists start drive

By Ted S. Melendres, *Sports Editor*

DOHA, QATAR—THE FINEST AVAILABLE BILLIARDS TALENTS the country could cough up for the 15th Asian Games join two boxers in the medal hunt today as the Philippines tries to arrest its sagging fortunes seven days into the quadrennial competition.

For a change, World Pool quarterfinalist Jeffrey De Luna, San Miguel Asian Tour leg winner Antonio Gabica and the veteran Leonardo Andam set out as among the favorites in the men's 9-ball and 8-ball events following the Filipinos' forgettable performances in snooker and English billiards.

CUE/ A26

RP SKED
Dec. 7

BADMINTON (Aspire)—Mixed doubles quarterfinals (Kennie and Kennevic Asuncion)

BEACH VOLLEYBALL 4 p.m.—Tupaz/Verayo vs Pradeep/Poolhathan (India); 7 p.m.—Ilustre/Pascua vs Phokongploy/Tenpaksee (Thailand)

BOWLING 9 a.m.—Men's Team-of-5; 1:30 p.m.—Women's Team-of-5

CHESS 3 p.m.—Mixed team Round 2 (Ronald Dableo, Darwin Laylo, Jedara Docena)

CUE SPORTS 1 p.m.—Men's arom 3 singles (Reynaldo Grandea vs. Duong Anh Vu); Men's 8-ball (Antonio Gabica, Leonardo Andam); Men's 9-ball (Jeffrey de Luna, Antonio Gabica)

ROWING (West Bay Lagoon) 9:50 a.m.—Men's lightweight singles sculls Final C (Nilo Cordova); 11:10 a.m.—Men's singles sculls Final B (Jose Rodriguez)

SAILING 11 a.m.—Mistral Light Race 5 and 6 (German Paz); Mistral Heavy Race 5 and 6 (Reneric Moreno); 470 Race Men 4 and 5 (Ridgely Balladare, Rommel Chavez)

SHOOTING 8:30 a.m.—Men's skeet qualification (Patricio Bernardo, Paul Brian Rosario, Darius Hizon)

SOFT TENNIS 9 a.m.—Enriquez/Silvoza vs Hanada/Kawamura (China); 10 a.m.—De Leon/Noguit vs Xiong/Zhang (China); 10 a.m.—Bantay/Escala vs Fang/Lan (Chinese Taipei); 11 a.m.—Silvoza/Enriquez vs Lin/Yeh (Chinese Taipei); 1 p.m.—De Leon/Noguit vs Nakahori/Takagawa (Japan); 1 p.m.—Bantay/Escala vs Jiang/Shi (Chinese Taipei); 2 p.m.—Enriquez/Silvoza vs Jha/Putuwar; 3 p.m.—Noguit/De Leon vs Lkhagvasuren/Radnaabazar; 3 p.m.—Bantay/Escala vs Hamanaka/Tsuji (Japan)

SWIMMING (Hamad Aquatic Center)—Heats (10 a.m.); Finals (6 p.m.)—Men's 50-meter backstroke (Ryan Arabejo); Men's 200-meter breaststroke (Miguel Molina, Gerard Bordado); Women's 50-meter butterfly (Erica Totten, Marichi Gandionco); Men's 1,500-meter freestyle (Ryan Arabejo); Men's 4 x 100-meter medley relay (Raul Arabejo, James Walsh, Miguel Molina, Kendrick Uy)

TAEKWONDO (Qatar Sports Club) 2 p.m.—Women's finweight (Kristie Elaine Alora); Women's lightweight (Veronica Domingo); Men's finweight (John Paul Lizardo); Men's lightweight (Donald Geisler)

TENNIS—Mixed doubles

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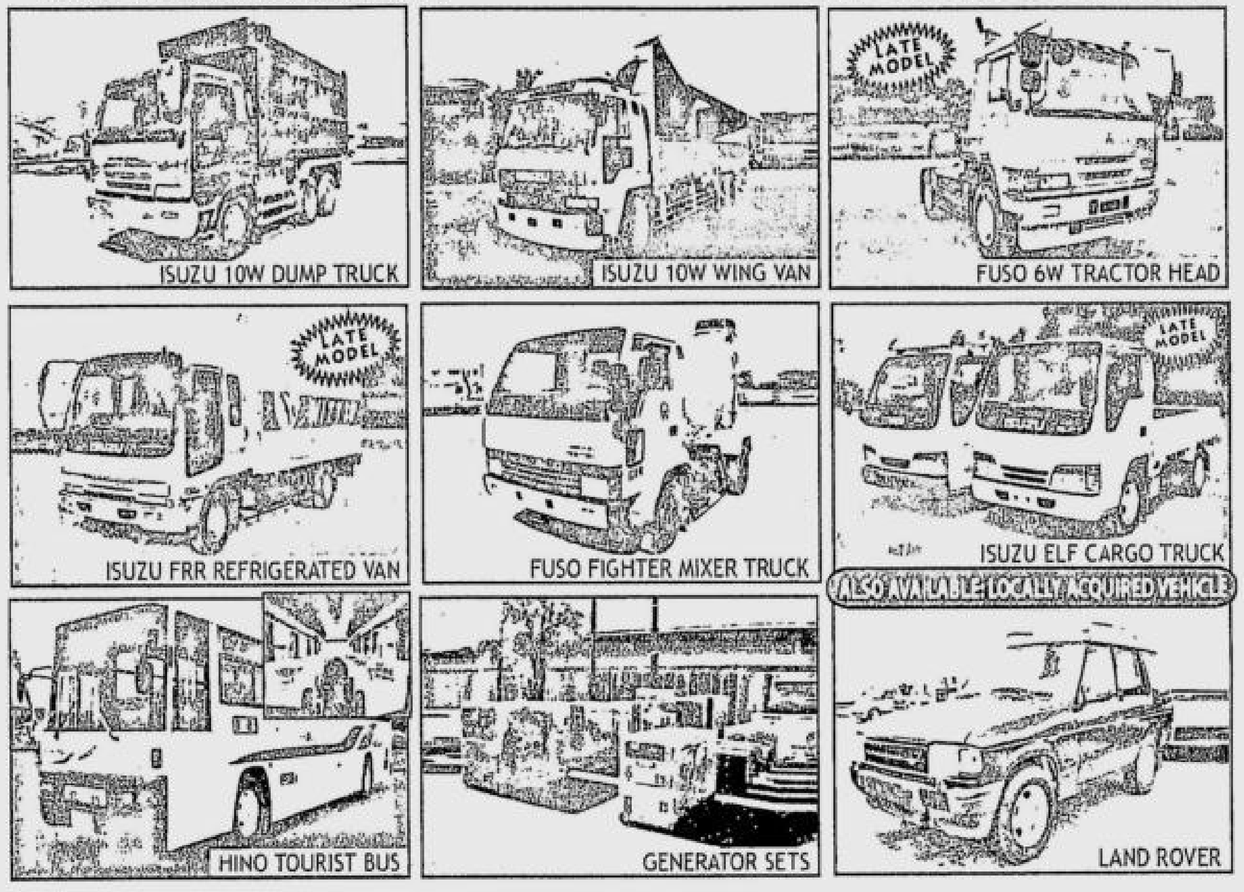

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Payla, Marcial gun for medals today

By Ted S. Melendres

DOHA, QATAR—PLAY YOUR game and don't lose heart.

Flyweight Violito Payla and featherweight Anthony Marcial have both heard this several times before, but the tone of their boss' reminder this time was unmistakable.

They are expected to pull through.

Manny Lopez, the head of the Amateur Boxing Association of the Philippines, is not one to put undue pressure on his fighters, but with the hopes of a nation resting on their shoulders, Lopez's unsaid wish was palpable.

Payla goes up against India's Jitender Kumar and Marcial clashes with Kazakhstan's Galib Jafarov Thursday seeking a victory that will assure each Filipino of at least a bronze medal in boxing at the Sport City's Aspire Hall 5 here.

The odds are just about even for Payla, a 27-year-old Army private first class from Cagayan de Oro City, and the 18-year-old Kumar, who took the bronze medal in this year's Commonwealth Games in Melbourne, according to RP boxing officials here.

Like the quick-punching, Cuban-coached Indian, Payla reached the quarterfinals of the 2002 Busan Asiad.

The Filipino, though, enjoys an edge in experience and counts at least four gold medals in international meets, including the Asian Championships in Puerto Princesa City in 2004.

That can't be said, though, of Marcial, the 20-year-old from Zamboanga City who has yet to make his mark in a big international arena.

Against the 28-year-old Jafarov, a quarterfinalist in the Athens Olympics, the Filipino needs the same ferocity he displayed in halting Iraq's Suraka Mahdi by RSC-Os (referee stop contest-outscored) in his second fight.

The seemingly tireless Jafarov outpointed Sri Lanka's Kamal Sameera, 26-14, to set up the quarterfinal fight with Marcial.

A confident Payla measured Vietnam's Tran Quoc Viet in the first round of their fight on Sunday before unloading fierce combinations to the head and putting the fight away via a lopsided 35-11 decision.

"I studied his strengths and weaknesses first," Payla said in Filipino. "No matter what happened, I had to make sure that I had done my homework."

Three more Filipinos—flyweight Godfrey Castro, bantamweight Joan Tipon and lightweight Genebert Basadre—climb into the ring tomorrow each needing a victory to clinch a sure medal.

Castro, the last-minute replacement for the suspended Harry Tanamor, battles a lightly regarded Ali Saad Al Ahmry of Saudi Arabia; Tipon collides with the dangerous Kim Won-guk; and Basadre sets out as the underdog against Turkmenistan's Serdar Hudayberdiyev.

The 20-year-old Castro stopped an overmatched Zamzai Azizi of Malaysia 12 seconds into the third round (RSC-Os) while Tipon whipped Chinese Taipei's Liu Shih-jung, 23-10.

Basadre survived an eight-count standing knockdown in the third round before nipping Pakistan's Ashgar Ali Shah, 20-19.

PAYLA

Mu shatters world snatch lift standard

DOHA—ANOTHER WORLD RECORD WAS demolished by a Chinese lifter Wednesday as swimmers from the sporting giant worked to claw back pride in the Asian Games pool after stinging criticism from coach Zhang Yadong, Mu Shuangshuang smashed the world snatch mark on the way to winning gold in the +75kg category of the women's weightlifting, bringing to five the number of world records to fall in Doha.

The 22-year-old double world silver medallist lifted 139kg to beat by 1kg the previous record set by South Korean Jang Mi Ran in May.

Jang had failed in her attempt to break her own record just minutes before Mu's successful effort, and she had a chance to win the event but bombed out at what would have been a record-equalling 182kg in the clean and jerk.

The 23-year-old double world champion had to make do with silver with Thailand's Annipa Moontar taking bronze.

Thailand's Pawina Thongsuk set a world mark in the clean and jerk of the women's 63kg category earlier in the week while China's Chen Yanqing produced three world records to win gold in the women's 58kg category.

More records could fall later Wednesday when Iran's double Olympic weightlifting champion Hossein Rezazadeh, one of the strongest men on earth, enters the fray.

Nine Iranian lifters were banned for two years for testing positive just months before the Games but Rezazadeh, known as the Iranian Hercules, was not among them and he will compete in the heavyweight 105+ category here.

Rezazadeh, who has won an incredible 10 gold medals at the world championships and holds the world records for the snatch (213kg) and total (472kg) as well as the clean and jerk, is the defending Asian Games champion.

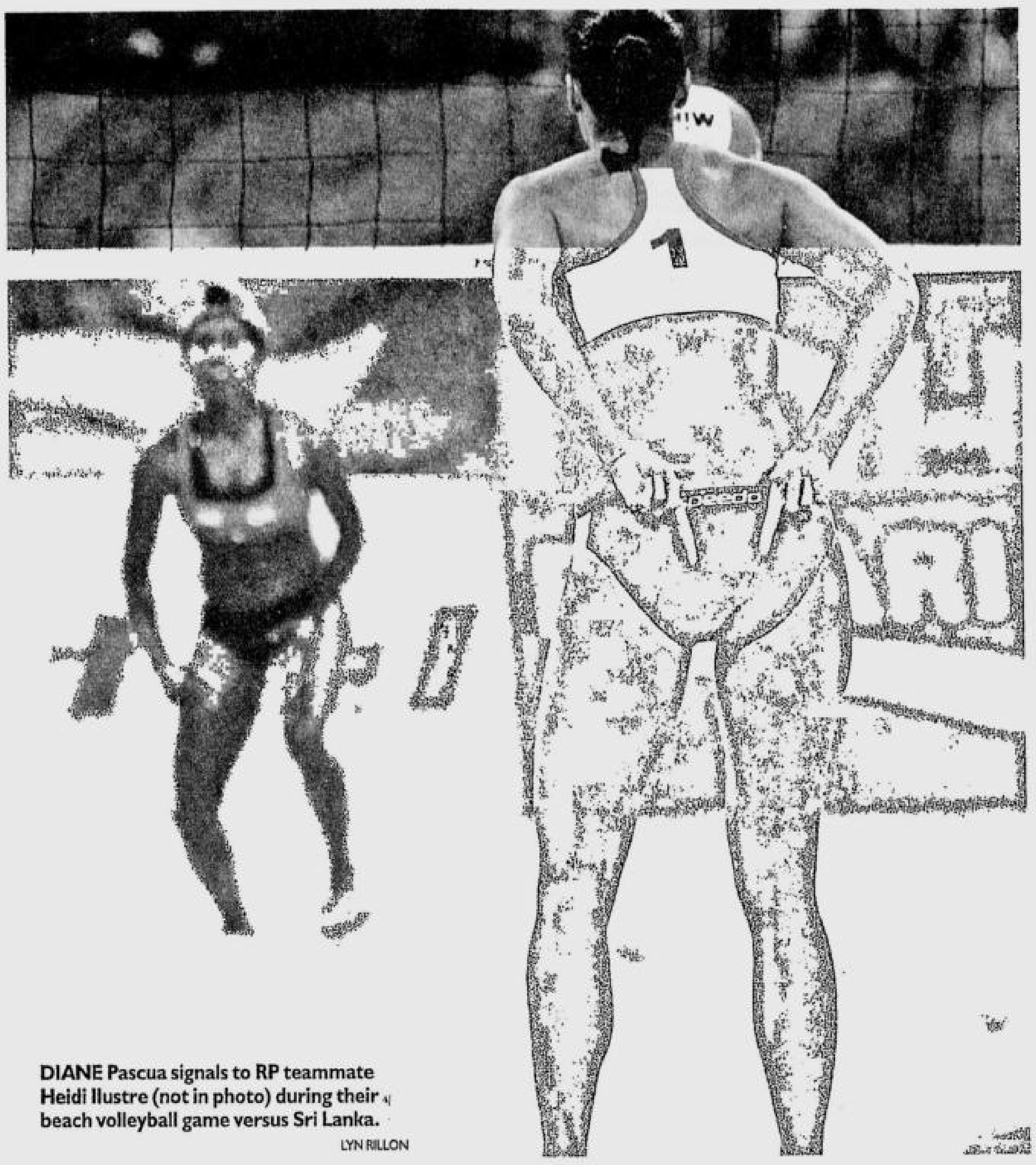
Midway through day five, China had 67 gold medals to Japan's 18 and South Korea's 14. Kazakhstan, thanks to its shooters and weightlifters, has 10.

While the Chinese have been thumping allcomers across the board, its swimmers have not lived up to the high standards demanded by coach Zhang, who, like all competitors, has his eye on the Olympics in Beijing.

Zhang set his team the target of winning four out of seven gold medals on Tuesday but they had to settle for three, which didn't go down well.

"The morale of the team will be affected by that defeat," stormed Zhang. "It should not have happened."

AFP



DIANE Pascua signals to RP teammate Heidi Ilustre (not in photo) during their beach volleyball game versus Sri Lanka.

LYN RILLON

Cue artists start drive

From page A25

The boxing team sends flyweight Violito Payla and featherweight Anthony Marcial into the ring with each pug needing a victory to clinch at least a bronze medal.

But a former world champion from Kazakhstan and an Indian fresh off a bronze-medal performance in the Commonwealth Games stand in the way of the RP pugs.

Payla, the 27-year-old Army enlisted man from Cagayan de Oro City, has the edge in experience as he takes on 18-year-old Jetinder Kumar of India while Marcial, the rookie from Zamboanga City, collides with Kazakh Galib Jafarov, gold medalist in the 2003 world championship.

Between chances

"Between the two boxers, Payla has better chances of advancing to the semifinals," said Manny Lopez, president of the national boxing association. "Anthony (Marcial) is a first timer in this level of competition and he is fighting a former world champion."

Filipino bidders compete in four categories in the taekwondo competition that gets under way at the Qatar Sports Club in the afternoon, the sailors take to the cold, emerald waters off the Doha Sailing Club to vie in three events, and the skeet shooters open up at the Lusail range for the men's individual and singles qualification.

Southeast Asian Games finweight gold medalist Kristie Elaine Alora, 2002 Busan Asiad lightweight bronze medalist Veronica Domingo, former US Open finweight champion John Paul Lizardo and Athens Olympian Donald Geisler (lightweight) open up against still unnamed foes. The draw will be held an hour before the fights.

German Paz, also a SEA Games winner, vies in the mistral light race, Reneric Moreno competes in the mistral heavy race and the pair of Ridgely Balladares and Rommel Chavez seek semifinal berths in the busy sailing competition that starts at 11 a.m.

Patricio Bernardo, Darius Hizon and Paul Brian Rosario take on a field that includes three former world champions from India, China and Kuwait in the skeet competition.

Only two Filipino rowers remained with a medal chance at the West Bay Lagoon with Jose Rodriguez barging into the Final B race in the single sculls and Nilo Cordova claiming a berth in the Final C grouping in the lightweight single sculls. Eight rowers made it to each medal race.

Tenpin bowlers

The tenpin bowlers also resume their medal hunt in the men's and women's teams of five at the Qatar Bowling Center, with Markwin Tee and Cecilia Yap backstopping the RP squads.

Tee, who counts with an impressive 1464 in the men's doubles, and Yap lead the Filipinos in the all-events scoring.

Over at the sandcourts of Sports City, Diane Pascua and Heidi Ilustre start out as the underdogs when they clash with the SEA Games champion pair of Yupa Phokongploy and Usa Tenpaksee of Thailand for seventh place and a shot at fifth place in the double-elimination tournament.

The Fil-American stunners have been drawing hundreds of Filipino workers and Asiad volunteers (see related story) to their matches, including the one last night where they whipped a Sri Lankan tandem in straight sets.

The team of National Open champion Darwin Laylo, Grandmaster-candidate Ronald Dableo and Jodera Docena play in the second round of the mixed event in chess at 3 p.m. while eight swimmers return to the Hamad Aquatic Center for the heats in five events.

Miguel Molina achors the 4x100-meter medley relay squad that also includes Ryan Arabejo, James Walsh and Kendrick Uy, Arabejo competes in the 50m and 1,500m freestyle, Molina and Gerard Bordado vies in the 200m breaststroke and Erica Totten and Marichi Gandionco try their luck in the 50m butterfly.

Elsewhere at the Khalifa International Tennis and Squash Complex, four Filipino pairs open their bid in the doubles of the medal-rich soft tennis competitions.

No need to panic—Ramirez

By June Navarro

THERE'S NO NEED TO PANIC WITH the Philippines still going without a medal so far in the Asian Games.

Chef de mission William "Butch" Ramirez yesterday said disciplines where Filipino athletes are expected to strike hard have yet to begin.

With the early setbacks in bowling and billiards six days into the two-week Doha, Qatar meet, Ramirez said he is pinning his hopes on the combat sports to deliver the medals for Team Philippines.

"There's really no need to panic. Some of the disciplines where we could win medals haven't started yet," Ramirez told the INQUIRER in an overseas phone interview.

Taekwondo will begin today where the RP jins shoot for the 12 of the 16 gold medals at stake.

Karatedo will not start until Dec. 12 with the karatekas entered in nine of 13 weight categories while wushu, which stakes 11 gold medals, will start on the penultimate day (Dec. 14) of the Asiad.

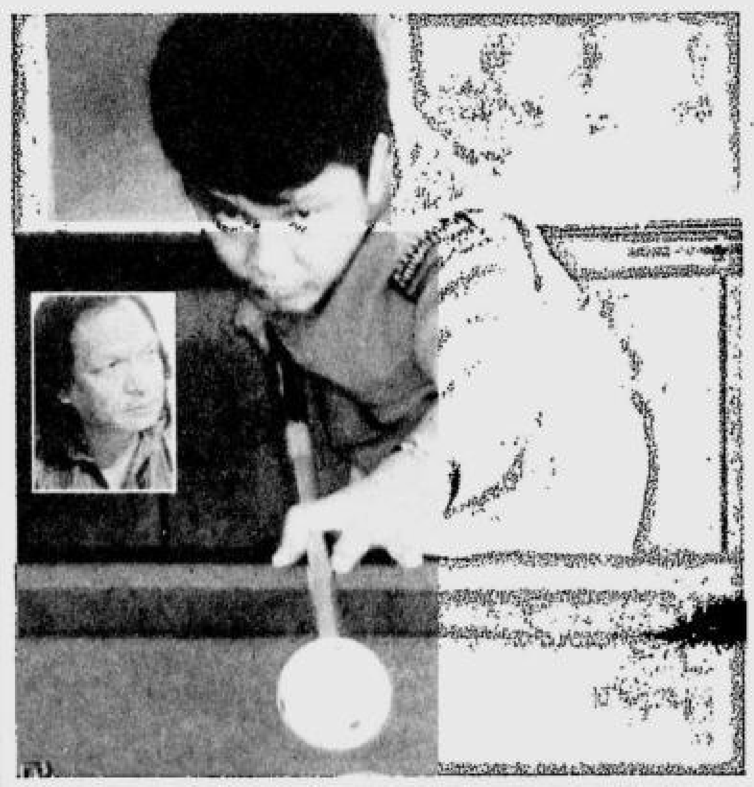
Boxing is on course to produce medals with five Filipinos sweeping their initial assignments led by flyweight Violito Payla and featherweight Anthony Marcial, who will be fighting for a slot in the medal round of the quarterfinals today.

Light flyweight Godfrey Castro, bantamweight Joan Tipon and lightweight Gilbert Basadre are scheduled to fight for a bronze medal on Friday.

"In the coming days, we expect boxing to enter the medal rounds and produce at least a gold and a silver," said Ramirez.

"The initial days were quite difficult for the Philippines but I hope we could win one gold on the first week and at least 2-3 golds on the second week," added the Philippine Sports Commission chair.

Billiards squad good for gold



ANTONIO GABICA: World-class caliber. Inset is Perry Mariano.

ALTHOUGH FAR FROM THE BEST TEAM that the country could have assembled for the Asian Games' billiards competition in Doha, Qatar, Team Philippines is still enough to win a gold medal.

Or so believes a billiards patron whose wards have thrived in the shadows of the country's greatest pool sharks.

"[The players] we have sent there may not be as popular as Efren "Bata" Reyes or Ronnie Alcano, but they are world-class caliber as the two, and we are upbeat on their chances to win the gold, particularly in the 8-ball and 9-ball," said businessman and pool patron Perry Mariano on the eve of the Doha Games' 8-ball competition.

"These players (Antonio Gabica, Leonardo Andam, Jeff de Luna) just haven't received enough support which we in the billiards industry feel should give them," Mariano said.

The Philippines is fielding Gabica and Andam in the 8-ball event. They both drew a bye in the opening round and will start seeing action in the Round of 32.

"Gabica and Andam are very good 8-ball players, only that they—like many of our billiards players here in the country—don't get enough support for the needed exposure," added Mariano.

Gabica will open his Asiad campaign against Gundsambuu Baatarchuluun of Mongolia, while Andam will face Vietnam's Nguyen Hoang Lam.

Mariano is also optimistic about De Luna's chance in the 9-ball competition, which will not begin until tomorrow, and where Gabica is also entered.

"Jeff is one of our rising pool stars as shown in the recent World Pool (Championship)," said Mariano.

De Luna and Gabica are both Mariano's wards, along with the reigning World Pool championship titlist Alcano and current World Pool League winner Dennis Orcullo.

Four years ago, the Philippines won gold in the 9-ball doubles courtesy of Francisco "Django" Bustamante and Antonio "Nickoy" Lining in Busan, South Korea, while the paired of Valle and Romeo "Snooky" Villanueva took the gold in the 9-ball doubles in the 1998 Bangkok edition in Thailand.

Marlon Bernardino, contributor

Spring vs Osmeña-Cebu as NBC playoffs begin

THE 2006 SPRING COOKING OIL-NBC National basketball tournament playoff begins today with Spring-Tagaytay aiming for a semifinal berth against Osmeña-Cebu at the Emilio Aguinaldo College gym.

The Spring cagers of NBC president Nathaniel "Tac" Padilla and executive vice president, Mayor Bambol Tolentino, are slightly favored in the 6 p.m. contest.

The Cooking Oil Masters are armed with a 6-3 record in the classification phase of the tourney sponsored by Sulpicio Lines, Spring Cooking Oil, Nature's Spring, Molten, Holiday Plaza Hotel-Cebu and Prime Channel.

Osmeña-Cebu finished with a 4-5 slate.

The team of former senator John Osmeña beat Spring-Tagaytay in their only meeting so far, 68-63. But that will not matter any more, according to coaches of both squads.

"This is already the playoffs. We have to raise our game," declared Osmeña-Cebu coach Bing Victoria.

Victoria will lean on Marlon Legaspi, Billy Moody, Fil-Am guard Rich Hardin, James Zablan and Alwyn Espiritu.

While Osmeña-Cebu is looking to extend its maiden campaign in the country's premier regional loop, Spring-Tagaytay will try to move on to the semis.

"We'll try to finish it. We can't afford to be complacent just because Osmeña-Cebu is an expansion team. It has veteran players and a smart coach," said Spring-Tagaytay mentor Efren "Yong" Garcia.

Garcia pins his hopes on Nani Epondulan, Danny Capobres, Aldrin Morante, Rodel Mallari, Marvin Yambao and Gilbert Neo.

If Spring wins, it will meet the winner between Valencia Golden Harvest and North Cotabato Braves in the semis. Valencia and North Cotabato will clash at the RMC gym in Davao City tomorrow.

A win by Osmeña-Cebu will force a do-or-die game at The Arena in San Juan tomorrow.

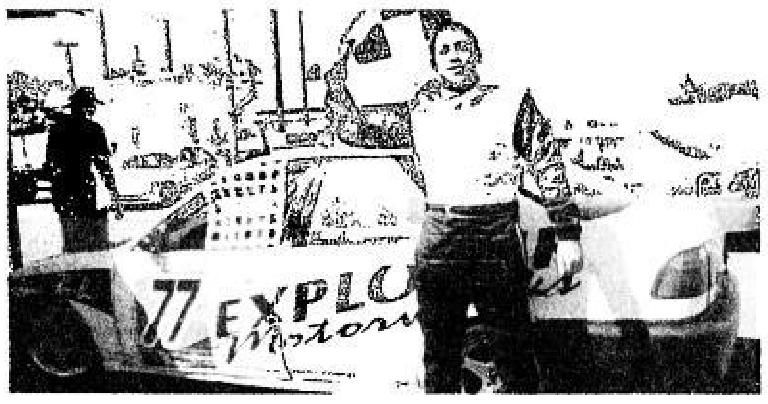
SPORTSWATCH

Mighty Filters, Pacific Supertex gain semis

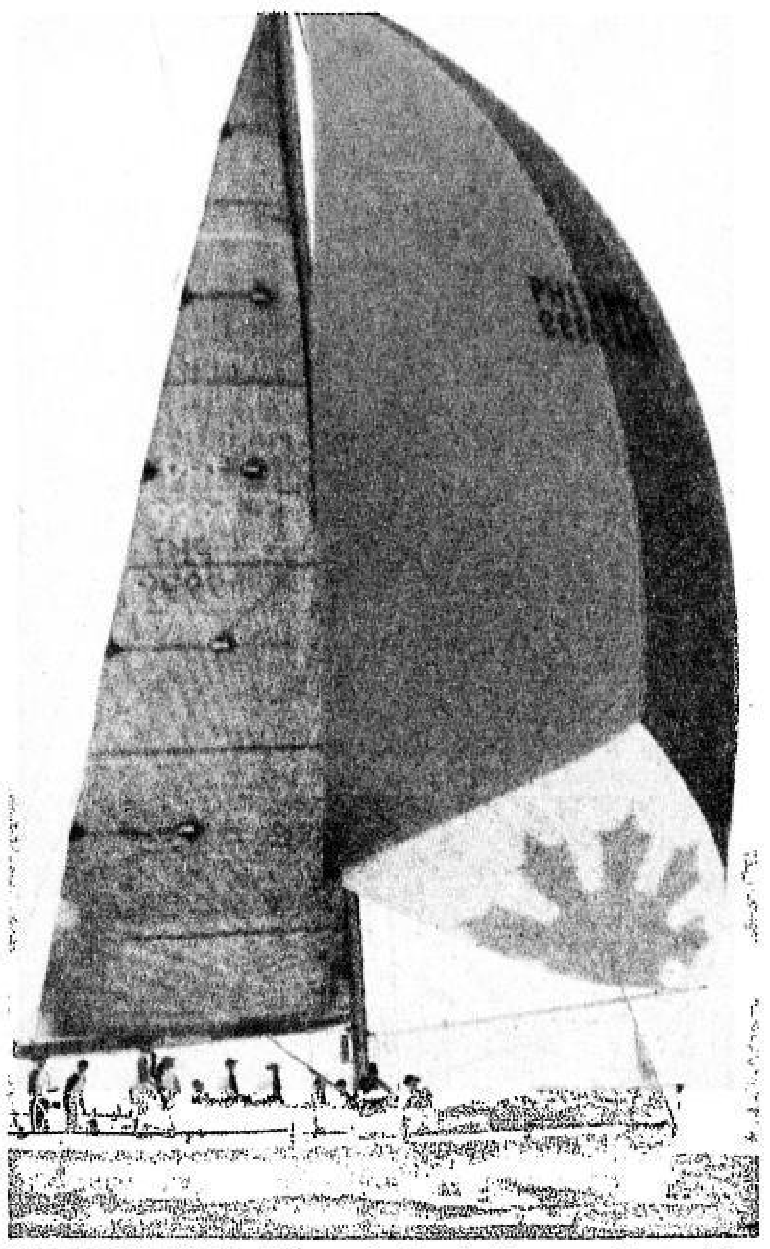
MIGHTY FILTERS AND PACIFIC SUPERTEX SUBDUED CKP168.COM AND Trace Red, respectively, last Sunday to barge into the semifinals of the MBL Corporate Basketball League at the Reyes Gym. Marvin Polayapoy missed a three-point attempt in the closing second and Mighty Filters escaped with a 77-74 win over CKP 168.com while Rey Gabriel and Mark Marcos shone as Pacific Supertex thwarted Trace Red, 81-77. Meanwhile, The Philippine Star routed Air Relay, 103-62, to stay in contention. With the win The Star tied CKP168.com at third place with 4-2 win-loss records after the penultimate playdate of the tournament aired on the Metroball Show every Thursday at 11 p.m. on IBC 13. Breathing down their neck is PRC Wangs at 3-3. EDC Caltex stunned PRC Wangs, 83-76.

Apordabol derby at Roligon today

THE 2006 EDITION OF ROLIGON MEGA COCKPIT'S APORDABOL INCREDIBOL 5-cock derby, which attracted more than 250 entries, starts at 4 p.m. today. The first batch of 85 participants will see action in today's 2-cock elimination round. Among the favorites are 2006 Hatawan champion Leobeng Villarama of Bulacan, Mauro Prieto, Col Tabique, Arnold Gregorio, Dong Lacson, Jess Bautista, Ben Uy, Madison Go, Dado Andal, Flor Mallari, Rico Chan, Larry Amante, Rey Briones. Bubot Booc and A. Astorga. To be hosted by Rolly Ligon, the four-day spectacle dangles a brand new, seven-seater Toyota Avanza for the fastest win champion. A total prize of P2 million is at stake for an entry fee of P6,600. For details, call 851-2275; 833-1638 and 852-9812.



SWEEPER: Uly Maningding winds up the 2006 San Mig Coffee-Petron Blaze Cup Philippine Touring Car Championships series with a sweep to capture the Group 3 Production Class crown recently at the Subic International Raceway. Maningding, who finished with 116 points, is backed by Explorer Motorsports, College of St. Catherine, Sta. Quiteria Market, Cocoy Alberto Racing Engine, Subic Montessori, Aim High Trucking, Autocircuit, Alelinos Catering and CSS Image Design.



RECORD-SETTER: The 46-foot yacht eStandard Insurance Centennial skippered by Philippine Sailing Association president Judes Echauz, set a record time of 11 hours and 14 minutes in the 80-mile Manila to Puerto Galera Regatta. It also won the overall championship, its third this year after the Manila to Boracay race and the 2006 President's Cup Regatta.

Sista shoots for solo 2nd vs C. Lhuillier

HENKEL SISTA-ST. BENILDE TRIES TO GRAB solo second place when it tackles Cebuana Lhuillier-Pera Padala today in the 2007 PBL Silver Cup at the Olivarez Sports Center in Parañaque.

With 6-foot-9 Samigue Eman expected to finally see action, the Super Sealers (3-2) are slightly favored over the Pera Padala squad (2-2) in their 2 p.m. contest.

TeleTech (2-2) shoots for a second straight win against struggling Magnolia (1-3) at 4.

Assistant team manager Jude Roque said Eman may not be in tip-top shape and would probably play just for a few minutes but coach Caloy Garcia said the Davao City cager will definitely be a factor since the Super Sealers badly need a legitimate center.

The Super Sealers, although missing the indisposed Eman, are tied with Mail & More behind unbeaten leader Hapee-PCU.

Pera Padala's Ken Bono, Macky Escalona and Doug Kramer are expected to go all-out today following their dismal performances against the Titans.

Teletech's strength comes from Ariel Capus who accounted for 25 points, including a 4-of-5 three-point shooting against the Moneymen.

He is expected to get support from veterans Al Magpayo, Mel Latoreno, Paul Guerrero and Eugene Tan.

The Spinners, on the other hand, are not to be taken for granted given the power of their lineup built around NCAA champion team San Beda.

Marc Anthony Reyes

STANDINGS	W	L
Hapee-PCU	5	0
Sista-SB	3	2
Mail & More	3	2
H. Centre	2	2
C. Lhuillier	2	2
TeleTech	2	2
Toyota Otis	2	2
Magnolia	1	3
Kettle Korn	0	5

GAMES TODAY
(Olivarez Sports Center)
2 p.m.—Henkel Sista-SB vs CL Pera Padala
4 p.m.—Magnolia Ice Cream vs TeleTech

Nike Golf Pacsports surges ahead

BAGUIO CITY—NIKE GOLF PACsports opened its bid for another double championship in impressive fashion yesterday in the 57th Fil-Am Invitational golf championship at the Camp John Hay and Baguio Country Club courses.

Jun Bernis shot a three-under-par 69 at John Hay as Nike surged to an eight-point lead over chief rival Manila Southwoods, 146-138, in its quest for a third straight Fil Division title.

With veteran Dave Hernandez and rookie Jessie Balasabas scoring 35 each at the nearby BCC course, Nike left Southwoods behind by 10 points, 134-124, in their duel for the Am Division crown.

"It's a good start," said Nike brand manager Yayi Escuadro with team captain Thomas Manotoc beaming beside him. "I hope we keep it up."

Joseph Labajo and Boyet Zaragoza backed Bernis with 37 each and Jonel Ababa made 33. Nike's other Am scorers were Rufino Bayron with a 33 and Mario Labajo with a 31.

"We played very well," said Hernandez. "The score showed we are a balanced team. If we keep this, our chances for a three-peat are good. We have a balanced team."

To stress this, Paul Echavez shot with 30 points and did not count.

Manila Southwoods shot 124 in the Am Division on the 35s of Chucho Martinez and Ramontito Garci, rookie Gino Bunyi's 29 and Justin Tambunting's 25 to place second with 124.

Hickam Mamala Bay shot a third round 91 at the Camp John Hay layout for 314 to take the Fil Division Flight B lead by nine. AAV-Robros-Ventureslink made 92 to place second with 305.

Rusty Barfield came up with 27 to pace the Hickam bets. Jude Sorg backed Barfield with 25.

Sta. Lucia Tour Luzon leg blasts off

IT'S GOING TO BE LIKE A sprint race for Alta Vista, Rancho Palos Verdes and Eagle Ridge when the Luzon leg of the Sta. Lucia Tour is played in three courses starting today. Alta Vista, in the front seat with 69 points, tries to protect the lead it has built the past two legs that brought the participants to championship courses in Davao and Cebu.

Defending overall champion Rancho Palos Verdes, with 65 points, is out to make a final push for its repeat bid while Eagle Ridge, running third at 61, hopes to make the most of its three chances to reverse its fortune.

The Davaoeños, however, will be motoring to its first course assignment, Summit Point in Lipa City straight from the airport and without the benefit of a practice round. Their tee-off schedule starts 10 a.m.

Aside from Eagle and Summit, Orchard is the third host for the Luzon leg of the course-hopping series among members of the Sta. Lucia family of golf clubs.

Lakewood of Cabanatuan stands at fourth with 42, Summit Point is next at 36, Royale Tagaytay 31, Orchard 14 and Caliraya Springs last with two.

Capping this year's Tour is the awarding ceremonies on Saturday at the Eagle Ridge clubhouse where Sta. Lucia bigwigs Exy Robles, Teng Santos and engineer Winnie Gob are expected to be on hand.

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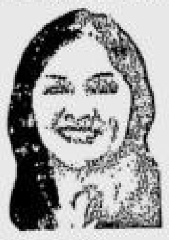
Jinggoy asks MVP for SBP presidency

IN HUDDLE



Beth Celis

WHAT HAVE WE got to show so far in Doha, Qatar? After five days of competition as I write this, nada. Nothing. Not a single medal.

Former SEA Games national training director Mike Keon was right. Months before the big sporting event, he told me that this year's Asiad is going to be very tough.

"That's because all the Asian countries will be using this as the yardstick in choosing the athlete's who will compete in the Beijing Olympics. The standards set will be very high, with the athletes performing at the highest possible level to impress the selectors," Mike explained.

The other thing going against the Filipinos is that they didn't have the kind of training and preparation they got in last year's SEAG, where our nation finished overall champion.

***

He doesn't know it yet, but a fiery coach is being groomed by a PBA ballclub for board governor next season.

If and when this happens, he will be making history by being the first active governor/coach or coach/governor of the 33 year-old pro league.

Bet you some people will also get the surprise of their life, if this happens.

***

From an unimpeachable source in the BAP, we got word that BAP president Senator Jinggoy Estrada and SBP head Manny V. Pangilinan had a recent dialogue where the former laid his cards on the table.

In no uncertain terms, our source said Jinggoy asked MVP for the presidency of the united front which should retain the name of the BAP even as he offered the chairmanship to MVP.

The PLDT's head honcho and Jinggoy met at the (Don) Allado wedding where they both stood as major sponsors.

My source said the two parties still have to come to an agreement.

Incidentally, congratulations to MVP and his group which won the Maynilad bid.

***

Did Red Bull coach Yeng Guiao and Talk 'N Text team manager Frankie Lim actually come to blows during their carotid-bursting shouting match in Tacloban last week?

Both denied they did, although both admitted they nearly did.

According to Frankie, the closest they got to a body contact was a finger poke he got in the belly from Yeng, who was trying to get some breathing space.

Eye-to-eye, nostril-to-nostril, was how the two described their verbal confrontation, which ended in humongous fines for both parties, as a consequence.

Unlike Red Bull's Enrico Villanueva and Coke's Joseph Yeo who engaged in violence, Yeng and Frankie were not asked to shake hands and mend fences. Their paths did not even cross at the PBA office.

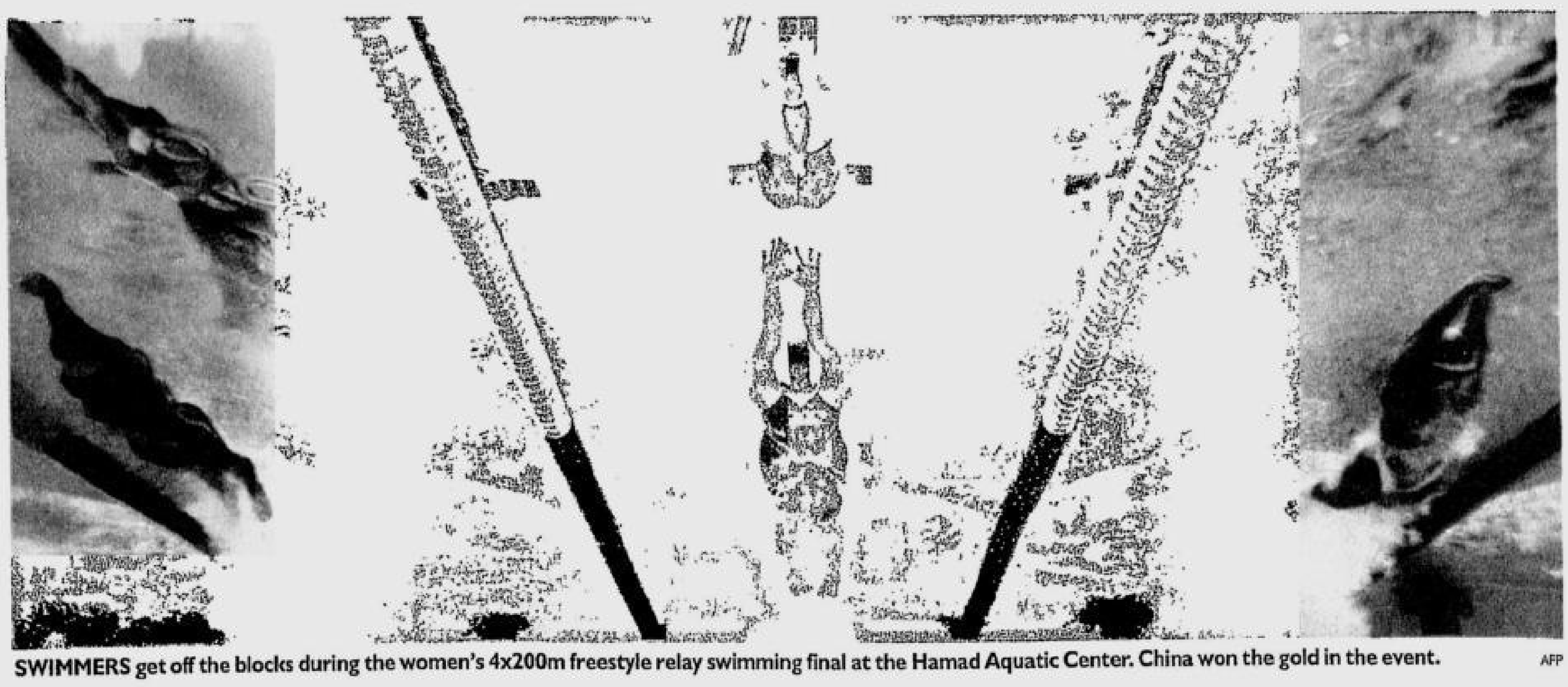
***

If he hadn't told me, I would never have guessed that my friend Lambert Ramos, Nextel president and chief coordinating officer of the PBA's Guam game last September, has a son old enough to be the president of Mail and More.

Johann Ramos, also the manager of the PBL's Mail and More team, is 30 years old, 6-foot-3 tall and an Economics graduate of Ateneo. He played basketball for Ateneo high school varsity and completed his MBA at AIM. Johann is married to the former Karla Ermita, niece of Executive Secretary Eduardo Ermita.

***

HOOPVINE: Now on her 16th week of. pregnancy, Mrs. James Yap Kris Aquino reports that she is at last over her evening sickness. "Okay na but I'm still picky about food and fragrances. And forever sleepy," she texted.:. More about Mon Fernandez from Teddy Perena of Team Ads: "I was with former PBA anchor Randy Sacdalan, when we dined at Tisoy, Mon Fernandez's resto-bar in Mandaue, Cebu. Randy is now based there and is working as general manager of a shipping company. He also sits on the sportscasting panel of the MVBA. He lamented that he lost precious PBA memorabilia such as trophies when he lent them to the league for an exhibit. The walls of Tisoy is adorned with Mon's career photos and uniforms since he was with the USC in Cebu. He told us he started using jersey No. 19 in Tanduay because his orig No. 10 was already assigned to Freddie Hubalde."



SWIMMERS get off the blocks during the women's 4x200m freestyle relay swimming final at the Hamad Aquatic Center. China won the gold in the event. AFP

Japan, China hike gold haul

DOHA, QATAR—JAPAN'S WIN IN THE men's double lightweight sculls Wednesday helped dent early double gold medal successes by China and Uzbekistan in rowing events at the Asian Games.

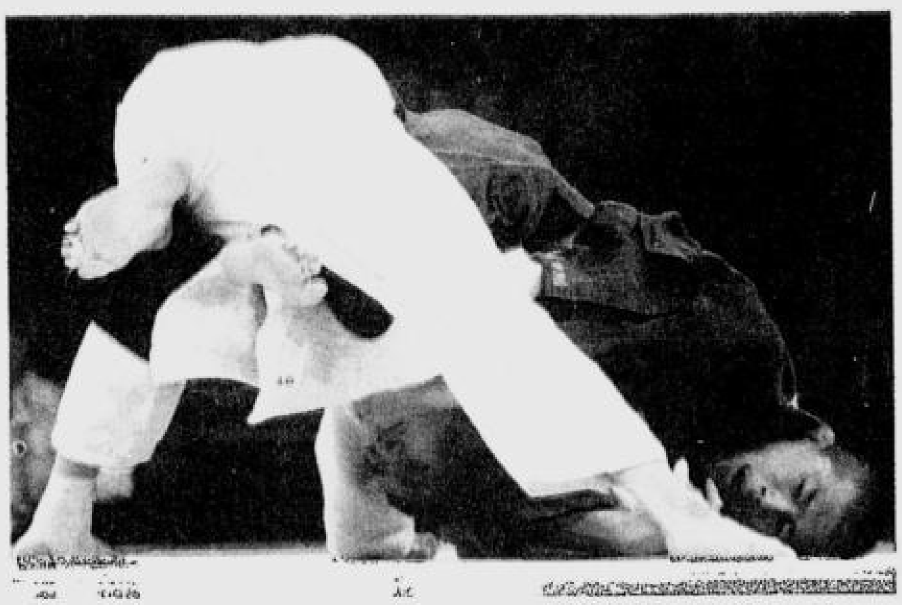
Hideki Omoto and Takahiro Suda of Japan sped down the seaside West Bay Lagoon course in three minutes, 19.29 seconds over the 1,000 meters, just ahead of the 3:19.92 posted by silver medal winners Thailand. India was third for the bronze.

"We wanted to go from the start with full power and try to keep the speed," said Suda. "I saw the Thai team coming closer at 750 meters and we called on each other to go faster."

Uzbekistan won gold in the men's double sculls—Vladimir Chernenko and Ruslan Naurzaliyev doing the honors—and Zarrina Ganieva and Sevara Ganiyeva took gold in the women's lightweight double sculls.

China, meanwhile won the women's double sculls with Li Qin and Tian Liang and the women's fours, boosting their runaway gold medal count to 65 early on the fifth day of competition.

Kazakhstan's 10-meter running target mixed team's gold at the Lusail shooting complex in the desert north of Doha was the only non-Chinese shooting win of the day.



JAPAN'S Tatsuaki Egusa, in blue, pins down South Korea's Cho Nam-suk during the Asian Games judo Men's under 60kg final. Egusa took the gold. AP

Chinese shooters took three other events, including Gan Lin in the 10-meter running target mixed and Wang Chengyi in the women's three-position 50-meter rifle.

Elsewhere, Yuka Watanabe had 26 points and Noriko Sakakibara added 25 to lead Japan to a 99-67 win over Lebanon in women's basketball.

Japan led by one point at halftime but ran away with the game in the second half, outscoring Lebanon 22-14 in the third quarter and 32-9 in the fourth.

Japan guard Yuka Oga said the game would give her team confidence in its next match Friday against gold medal favorites China.

"China is so big, but our style is so fast," said Oga. "Over 40 minutes we should run the fastbreak and get the open three-point shot, which is the Japanese style.

Thailand won the day's opening baseball game, beating winless Philippines 8-1, but both teams finished at the bottom of the six-team standings, Thailand at 1-4 and the Philippines 0-5.

South Korea played China later Wednesday, with the winner getting the bronze medal. Japan and Taiwan play for gold on Thursday.

In badminton, China made up for the disappointment of only taking bronze in 2002 by winning the men's team title, beating holders South Korea, 3-2.

The Koreans took the silver while Indonesia and Malaysia bagged the bronze.

In a thrilling clash which saw world singles champion Lin Dan beaten for the first time in the tournament in the opening match by Lee Hyun Il, three of the matches went to the deciding set.

Earlier the Chinese, whose women's team had clinched their title beating Japan 3-0 all in straight sets, had looked on rockier ground as a strangely subdued Lin was second best to Lee.

Lin even held three set points in the first but 26-year-old Lee won five points in succession to take it 22-20. *AP, AFP*

Top NBA scout to Asian cagers: Stop being nice

DOHA—ASIA'S BASKETBALL PLAYERS NEED to stop being so nice and start being more aggressive if they want to make the grade in the United States, according to top NBA scout Jason Filippi.

"Players must be more physical and become 'bad boys' on the court," he said.

"Compared to NBA competitions, Asian basketball has less athleticism. They have trouble with athletic players," said Filippi, a scout with the Portland Trailblazers in Doha to check on prospects at the Asian Games.

"In NBA you need the defence of intensity and to be aggressive."

He told the China Daily newspaper that this was one of the reasons that South Korean giant Ha Seung-jin was waived.

The 7-foot-3 center spent two seasons with Portland before being acquired by the Milwaukee Bucks in a four-player trade that sent former All-Star center Jamaal Magliore to Portland.

But the Bucks decided last month that he was surplus to requirements.

"Also I think players from China they are very respectful of their opponents," he said.

"Like Yao Ming, they apologize after a hard foul. But in NBA, players have to be mean, strict and physical on the court." One of Filippi's main focuses here is China's top NBA prospect Yi Jianlian, who is set to join the NBA draft next year.

Yi's age is listed as 19 but Filippi said there were people questioning this and he wanted to get to the bottom of the matter.

AGGRESSIVENESS on defense will help Asians make it to the NBA, says a top scout. AFP

"There is a rumour going around the United States and pretty much every NBA person has asked this question," he was quoted as saying.

"In the NBA, age is a very important issue. The younger he is, the more potential he has. They say you're 19, but you are really 21. You can still be a good player. You may not have much potential as someone who is two years younger." *AFP*

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2006 ASIAN GAMES MEDAL TALLY AS OF DEC.06, 2006-8:00 PM.

Nation	G	S	B	Total	Nation	G	S	B	Total
China	67	31	14	112	Syria	1	0	0	1
Japan	18	22	27	67	Saudi Arabia	1	0	0	1
North Korea	14	21	36	71	Iran	0	5	1	6
Kazakhstan	10	8	16	34	Vietnam	0	3	3	6
South Korea	3	6	9	18	Qatar	0	2	4	6
Thailand	2	6	6	14	Myanmar	0	2	2	4
India	2	5	4	11	Chinese Taipei	0	1	6	7
Mongolia	2	3	2	7	Emirates	0	1	1	2
Uzbekistan	2	0	4	6	Turkmenistan	0	1	0	1
Kuwait	2	0	1	3	Kyrgyzstan	0	1	0	1
Singapore	1	2	3	6	Iraq	0	0	1	1
Malaysia	1	2	2	5	Lebanon	0	0	1	1
Hong Kong	1	1	3	5	Tajikistan	0	0	1	1
Indonesia	1	1	2	4					

HOSOKAWA AFP

Japan holds off Chinese relay squad

DOHA, QATAR—DAISUKE HOSOKAWA WAS not about to let China start reasserting itself in the Asian Games swimming pool.

Hosokawa overhauled Qu Jingyu in the final strokes of the 4x100-meter relay to claim Japan's third swimming gold medal Tuesday—in a meet record time—to equal China's three gold medals for the evening.

China's swim coach Zhang Yadong thought Qu should have held off Hosokawa and given China a better cushion in the medal standings.

"The failure will be a blow to the morale of the whole team—this is something that should not have happened," Zhang said.

South Korean teenager Park Tae-hwan won the 400 freestyle in 3 minutes, 48.44 seconds to add to his Asian Games record-setting win in the 200 free on Sunday.

"I missed my target time at the 200 mark so had to swim much faster for the rest," said the 17-year-old Park.

China's Zhang Lin was second in 3:49.03 and Takeshi Matsuda of Japan third in 3:49.38.

Japan challenged China's swimming dominance for a third straight day, keeping the gap at two gold medals after China opened the meet with wins in five of the first six finals. *AP*

A 'butterfly' rises from the bloodshed

DOHA—IRAQI 10-YEAR-OLD AMER Ali, the youngest swimmer at the Asian Games, will have to speed up a little before winning gold medals, but just reaching Qatar was an achievement.

The eldest of three brothers from Baghdad, Amer is silent when asked about the conflict in Iraq with his coach Sarmal Mohammed urging journalists to avoid asking questions about the bloodshed.

Amer, who is just 1.55m tall and weighs 44 kilograms, prefers to talk about his ambition to become a champion butterfly racer rather than dwell on his country's current problems.

"I want to be like them," he said, pointing to the Japanese and Chinese champions who are sharing most of the gold medals at the Asian Games this week. "I want to win for Iraq."

His coach said that conditions in Iraq were tough for little Amer who can only train once a week in Iraq's only 50-meter pool.

"Sometimes he shows up and can't train because the heating has been turned off," said Sarmal. "With all the problems in Iraq, he is a courageous boy."

ALI REUTERS

Iraq has three swimmers here and all have competed in the morning heats but none has managed to break into a single final in the evening.

But Amer is the most promising and began the long haul to stepping up his speed by setting a personal best in the 100m backstroke on Tuesday.

He also competed in the 100m backstroke and his final ace, the 200m individual medley on Wednesday.

It was a harsh learning experience. His time of 2min 55.32 sec was a long way off the fastest time of 2:04.62 set by Japan's Hidemasa Sano.

"Yesterday I swam a personal best and I am pleased about that," said Amer, who is joined here by swimmers 14-year-old Ali Ahmed and 12-year-old Ali Ali.

Conditons are so bad in Baghdad that he believes his future as a swimmer may lie abroad.

"I would like to train in another country if possible so I can improve and get a better time. Who knows, maybe one day I will be able to win a gold medal for Iraq." *AFP*

Antonio bags 2nd place in Michigan tilt

FILIPINO GRANDMASTER ROGELIO "JOEY" Antonio Jr. bested Bill Calton and Richard Shiverland, both from the United States, in the tie-breaker to finish second overall in the recent 2006 Motor City International Chess Open at All King's Men Chess Store in Universal Mall in Warren, Michigan.

ANTONIO

The triumvirate tallied 4.5 points each in the sixth round Swiss System tournament which attracted 86 players.

Antonio, of the Philippine Army under the HHSQ department, needed only to draw with white to ensure at least a tie for first, but he was not able to hold eventual winner and fellow GM Nikola Mitkov (Elo 2650) of Fyrom in the endgame. Mitkov took the championship with 5.5 points.

Antonio's US campaign was supported by National Chess Federation of the Philippines president and Surigao del Sur Rep. Prospero "Butch" Pichay Jr., Philippine Sports Commission SC chair William "Butch" Ramirez and Calapan City Rep. Rodolfo Valencia.

Earlier, Antonio beat Jeff Aldrich (US), James Canty (US), Dmitry Obukhov (Russia), International Master Andrew Tcherepanov and (2505 Russia), respectively. He drew with IM Benjamin Finegold (USA) in the fifth round.

"Actually I went to the US with a double purpose," said Antonio, who arrived in the country on Sunday. "I played and at the same time underwent a checkup for my sinusitis."

The 43-year-old Antonio was forced to withdraw in the First PGMA International Open Chess Championships last month due to high fever and sinusitis.

The country's top scorer in this year Turin Olympiad shared the lead with 3.0 points but suffered three straight setbacks because of his illness and was forced to withdraw from the qualifier. *NM Marlon Bernardino, contributor*

Tams, Bombers cop semis seats

By Marc Anthony Reyes

FAR EASTERN AND JOSE RIZAL CAME UP with contrasting wins to complete the semifinals cast of the Fil-Oil Flying V Homegrown Cup last night at the Philsports Arena.

The Tamaraws first hacked out a 71-68 win over the San Sebastian before the Heavy Bombers routed an undermanned San Beda, 78-58, to make the semis.

They thus joined early Group A qualifiers De La Salle and University of the East in the pivotal stage of the league that pits the country's top collegiate teams.

Semis start on Dec. 13 with the Warriors taking on the Archers and the Heavies locking horns with the Tamaraws. The winners will collide in a winner-take-all finals on Dec. 18.

UE bested Letran 78-71 in the other game but it hardly made any effect on the semis roster.

The scores:

First Game

FEU 71—Sanga 19, Alisbo 9, Abaring 7, Cervantes 7, Tanuan 7, Vinluan 6, Barroca 4, Gerilla 4, Cabanot 3, Ramos 2, Baracael 2, Adolfo 1.

SSC-R 68—Viray 21, Raymundo 9, Saquillo 7, Bulawan 6, Juan 5, De leon 4, Dela Cruz 4, Umali 2, Datang 2, Ballesteros 2, Ampatuan 2, Juico 1, Aquino 0, Najorda 0, Tioseco 0.

Quarters: 24-19, 43-30, 59-53, 71-68

Second Game

UE 78—Bandaying 16, Acuna 13, Llagas 10, Canizares 7, Fampulme 6, Martinez 5, Zamar 5, Borboran 4, Etrone 2, Lingganay 2, Reyes 0, Napo 0.

LETRAN 71—Guevarra 14, Jasul 13, Daa 10, Del Rosario 10, Raneses 8, Qunday 8, Melegrito 3, Facundo 3, Balneg 2, Foronda 0, Dangcal 0, Gutiban 0.

Quarters: 21-20, 33-36, 59-50, 78-71

Third Game

JRU 78—Pradas 16, Dedicatoria 15, Bulangis 12, Cunanan 9, Echane 6, Wilson 4, Nocom 4, Cagoco 4, De Vera 4, Se 2, Yuzon 2, Seña 0, Apostol 0, Tumulak 0, Hayes 0, Montuano 0, Espeleta 0.

SBC 58—Castillo 14, Maagay 12, Camus 9, Tirona 8, Galinato 5, Antonio 4, Suguitan 3, Taupa 2, Singh 1, Sarangay 0, Espinosa 0.

Quarters: 19-15, 44-25, 63-46, 78-58

MARTIN Studeny: Filipinos' main obstacle. ERIK ARAZAS

Dandan, Barte gain ITF Junior quarters

By Marc Anthony Reyes

KYLE DANDAN, LAST week's champion, and unheralded Ralph Kevin Barte trounced their respective rivals yesterday to reach the quarterfinals of the Phinma-ITF Junior Championships Week 2 at the Rizal Memorial Tennis Center.

The top-seeded Dandan blew a 5-3 lead in the second set but quickly recovered to oust 6-foot-2 Ukrainian Dimitri Kovalyov with a 7-6 (3), 5-7, 6-3 win.

Barte, unheard of the past year after a brief stint with the junior Davis Cup team, overcame second seed Choi Jae-Won of Korea, 2-6, 6-3, 6-4.

The 17-year-old Barte advanced against unseeded Australian Matheson Klein, who scored a quick 6-3, 6-1 victory over Briton Martin Short.

Dandan thought he had Kovalyov beaten after taking that 5-3 lead only to see the hard-hitting qualifier rally to forge a deciding third set.

But the Filipino ace, who trained in Florida's International Tennis Academy, quickly acknowledged his mistake by bouncing back with might when it counted most.

"I need to be more consistent with my game. I tend to relax when I'm leading and that got me into trouble," he said.

Dandan will next face seventh-seeded Shin Jeok-ik, a no-nonsense Korean who eliminated Thailand's Phaninthon Pakpoomkamol, 7-5, 7-5.

Third seed and last week's runner-up Martin Studeny of the Czech Republic disposed of Taiwanese Huang Liang-chi, 6-3, 7-6 (7-3), while fourth seed Japanese Yuki Matsuo downed Korean qualifier Seol Jae-min, 6-4, 6-1.

Studeny's next assignment will be Japanese Toshiya Suzuki, who scored a 4-6, 7-6 (2), 6-2 shocker over No. 8 Korean Kan Ho-min. Matsuo tackles Malaysian Mohd Ashaa Zainal, who struggled past Thailand's Sorapon Imprapal, 7-6 (7-9), 7-6 (7-4).

Meanwhile, Jessica Marie Agra needed three sets to slip past Austrian Stephanie Hirsch, 6-1, 5-7, 6-1, and reach the girls quarterfinals.

She's up next against third-seeded Veronika Studeny of Czech Republic, who blasted Japanese qualifier Riko Fujioka, 6-3, 6-2.

Top seed Malaysian Jawairiah Noordin, ranked No. 219 in the ITF Juniors, overpowered Japanese Yoshimi Kawasaki, 6-2, 6-1, to advance against unseeded Japanese Misa Eguchi, who stunned sixth-seeded Christina Mathis of Austria, 6-3, 6-3.

In other games, second seed Russian Elizaveta Titova routed Indian Mohana Chintala, 6-1, 6-1, and compatriot Nedezda Guskova, last week's champion, bundled out Filipina Melissa Rose Orteza, 6-3, 1-6, 6-3. Japanese Machiko Shigefuji outlasted compatriot Yuko Adachi, 6-4, 2-6, 6-4, while unseeded Korean Kim Kun-hee toppled fifth-seeded Indian Aadnya Naik, 6-2, 6-4.

NEARLY P.6 MILLION

Barako, Pals draw stiff fines

By Musong R. Castillo

FINES AMOUNTING TO P567,600 WERE METED OUT yesterday by PBA Commissioner Noli Eala, who warned that "child-like" acts on court will be dealt with severely in the future.

Red Bull coach Yeng Guiao was slapped a two-game suspension and a P65,000 fine, while Frankie Lim, the Talk 'N Text team manager, received the same two-game ban on top of a P50,000 fine for their involvement in a courtside confrontation that took place in Tacloban last week.

The statement from the Commissioner's office described the Guiao-Lim altercation at midcourt as "child-like."

A total of 15 players and 18 staff members from Red Bull and Talk 'N Text were levied penalties for leaving their benches at the height of the Guiao-Lim confrontation.

"How can this (decision) be fair and just?" Guiao asked, when interviewed by the INQUIRER over the phone. "How can I draw a heavier penalty when he (Lim) was the one who crossed the line and charged at me?"

Both Guiao and Lim, who admitted to "starting it all," have maintained that they exchanged heated words but neither threw a punch, though the statement from the league reiterated that they "traded blows at the height of their tirade."

The PBA, meanwhile, will start drawing today the boundaries on what will be described as "inappropriate behavior" by players and team officials.

There were no breakdowns of the fines aside from those given to Guiao and Lim and Asi Taulava and Carlo Sharma, who were assessed P1,600 and P1,000, respectively.

FRANKIE LIM

YENG GUIAO

The others who were fined from Talk 'N Text were Anthony Washington, Jimmy Alapag, Harvey Carey, Patrick Fran, Victor Pablo, coach Derrick Pumaren, assistant coaches Tonichi Yturri, Bong Ramos, Bong Ravena and Agustin Tiongco and team staff Ahmed Baylen, Eugene Hermosa, Julius Ipo and Cedar Destura.

Penalized from the Red Bull side were Leo Najorda, Celino Cruz, Larry Fonacier, Junthy Valenzuela, Cyrus Baguio, Warren Ybañez, Enrico Villanueva, assistant coaches Roehl Nadurata, Rudy Hines and Gelacio Abanilla, team physician John Lim and team staff Jay Llanos Dee, Elmer Bola-Bola, Edgar Fernandez, Marlon Celis and Dominador Deocareza.

Bautista arrives, readies for Bohol homecoming

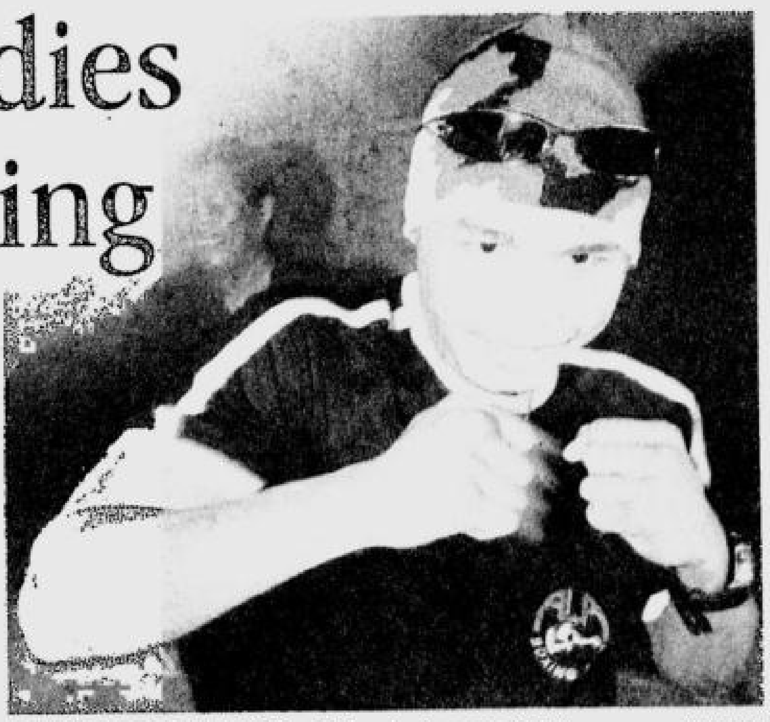
UNDEFEATED FILIPINO REY "BOOM BOOM" Bautista arrived early yesterday morning on a PAL flight from Los Angeles after his devastating fourth-round technical knockout win over Brazilian Giovanni Andrade last Sunday in Tampa, Florida.

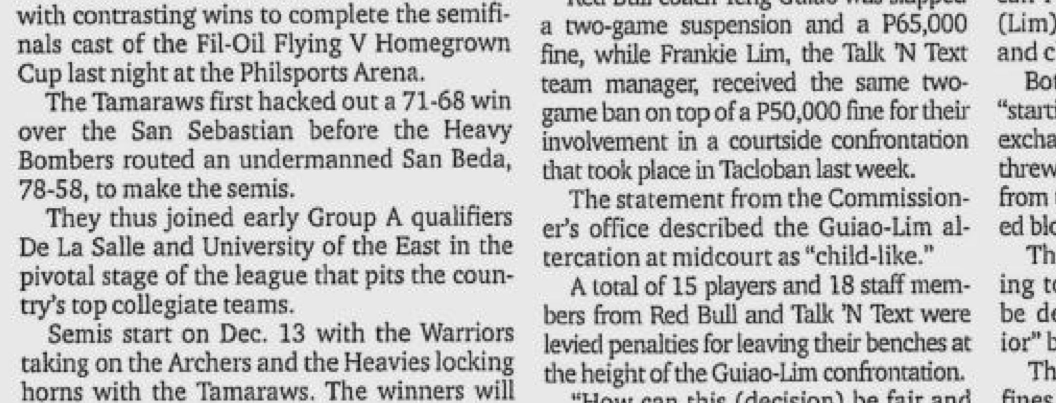
Among those who met Bautista at the airport were his manager Antonio L. Aldeguer and Tagbilaran City Mayor Dan Neri Lim. After an interview with ABS-CBN, Bautista proceeded to the Hyatt Hotel where he was treated to a welcome breakfast by Solar Sports executives and staff.

The young boxing sensation then flew to Cebu, where he was warmly received by peers and fans, before he joined the local media in a lunch press conference at the Cebu Grand Convention Center.

A grand welcome also awaits the former WBO Asia Pacific bantamweight champion from Candijay, Bohol, when he arrives in Tagbilaran City today on his way to a reunion with his family.

Bautista, unbeaten in 21 fights, said he would spend about one week with his family, before reporting back to the ALA Gym in Cebu to start yet another training camp for his possible February showdown with WBO super bantam champ Daniel Ponce de Leon. *Salven L. Lagumbay, contributor*


BOOM BOOM BAUTISTA: RP boxing's newest star. JESS YUSON


CHAMPS: CKP168.COM team members and league officials: Standing (from left)—Rudy Tan (Burlington) , Fritz Gaston (Commissioner), Dr. John Lim, Galen Cacha, Leo Vilar, Ira Buyco, Derrick Hubalde, Chito Jaime, William Fong, (playing team owner), Philip Butel, Kim Gandarosa, Ryan Lapid, Coach Adonis Tierra, JR Naguit, Jun Echavez, Boyet Fernandez, Martin Syjuco, Morty Fong, Bong Go; Seated—Paolo Malonzo, Jeffrey De Guzman, Ronnie Zagala, Jomar Tierra, JV Tierra, Imo Tierra, Joel Parcotilo; Seated (front)—Ailex Madrid (muse), Bianca Cagara, Mary Jane, Welchie, Charisse, Chelsea Ng, Macy Fong and Berna Cagara. CKP168.Com also topped the Cheerdance event of the Burlington-PAL Championship organized by Ted Perena.

World Cup: 3 WBO title fights

CEBU CITY—THREE WORLD TITLE bouts will be staged in a planned Philippines-Mexico showdown the country will host on Feb. 25 next year.

Filipino promoter Sammy Gello-ani, who recently beat Top Rank's Bob Arum for the right to promote the Z Gorres-Fernando Montiel WBO super flyweight championship, is also currently working with Golden Boy Promotions to add two more title bouts in the card and make it a pay-per-view prospect.

A clash between WBO super bantam duel between undefeated Filipino Rey "Boom Boom" Bautista and title-holder Danile Ponce de Leon is being arranged along with a WBO bantam clash between reigning titlist Jhonny Gonzalez and former world champ Gerry Peñalosa.

Gello-ani said the event will be billed as a World Cup of boxing with no less than GBP president Oscar De La Hoya and his partners Bernard Hopkins and Shane Mosley being invited to grace the event.

"If they come, we will roll out the red carpet for them like we've never done in the past. It will be a huge welcome for them," said sportsman Antonio L. Aldeguer, who manages Bautista and Gorres.

Aside from the three big bouts, the other explosive match-ups will pit Jimrex Jaca versus Jose Alberto Gonzalez, Donnie Nietes versus Gerardo Verde and Mark Jason Melliguen against Aaron Dominguez.

Also set to be included is Diosdado "Prince" Gabi, who will also take on a Mexican banger.

Meanwhile, WBO super fly champ Fernando Montiel has indicated that he is not afraid to face Gorres, and would travel to the Philippines to face his mandatory challenger.

"He is left-handed and Manny Pacquiao styled, but I'm confident that I'll be victorious... I want to be clear. I have never avoided anybody." *Salven L. Lagumbay, contributor*

Mavs, Suns shine

NJNETS.COM
DALLAS
41

DIRK Nowitzki of the Mavericks shoots against Mikki Moore of the Nets. AFP

Trail Blazers upset Pistons; Rockets soar behind T-Mac

EAST RUTHERFORD, NEW JERSEY—DIRK Nowitzki scored 26 points and Josh Howard added 23 to lead the Dallas Mavericks to a 92-75 victory over the New Jersey Nets on Tuesday night.

A night after their 12-game winning streak was snapped in Washington, the Mavericks were in front from the start and pulled away in the fourth quarter. Howard and Nowitzki led the surge, scoring all of Dallas' points in a 13-4 run that gave the Mavericks an 88-71 lead with 3:10 left.

Vince Carter scored 20 points for New Jersey, which lost for the seventh time in nine games.

The win pulled Dallas into a tie with San Antonio atop the Southwest Division and New Jersey fell into a first-place tie with Toronto in the Atlantic.

Nowitzki had a quiet first half with just four points until the final four minutes of the second quarter, and finished the half with 10. Howard picked up the slack with 15 points on 7-for-10 shooting.

In Auburn Hills, Michigan, Zach Randolph's short jumper put Portland ahead with 21.6 seconds to go, and the Trail Blazers stopped a five-game losing streak by surprising the Detroit Pistons, 88-85.

Randolph finished with 31 points and 13 rebounds, less than a year after scoring a career-best 37 in the same building.

Nash: 20 assists

At Phoenix, Steve Nash had an NBA season-high 20 assists and the Suns won their seventh straight game by routing the Sacramento Kings, 127-102.

Leandro Barbosa scored 26 points and Nash came within two assists of a career high, set in the Suns' 140-133 loss to the New York Knicks on Jan. 2. That also was the last time an NBA player had 20-plus assists in a game, according to the Elias Sports Bureau.

Phoenix product Mike Bibby scored 21 for the Kings, who have lost four straight games, their longest skid since they acquired Ron Artest from Indiana on Jan. 26, 2006. Artest was inactive with a sore lower back.

After opening the season 1-5, the Suns have won nine of 10 games and pulled within 1½ games of the Los Angeles Lakers in the Pacific Division.

At Houston, Tracy McGrady scored 31 points and dished out seven assists and Yao Ming added 27 points to help the Rockets crush the Golden State Warriors, 118-90.

Chuck Hayes grabbed a career-high 15 rebounds and Juwan Howard added 11 points and 11 rebounds for the Rockets, who shot 54 percent (45-of-84) against the NBA's worst defense. Houston won for the sixth time in seven games.

At Seattle, Rashard Lewis scored 29 points and the SuperSonics won consecutive home games for the first time this season with a 102-87 victory over the Atlanta Hawks.

Seattle was without Ray Allen, who didn't play because of a strained tendon in his right foot. Lewis helped pick up the slack with 18 points in the first half and six Sonics scored in double figures to help Seattle improved to 4-6 at home. It was its seventh straight win over Atlanta.

At Los Angeles, Elton Brand had 33 points and 17 rebounds to lead the Clippers over the Miami Heat, 101-97. *AP*

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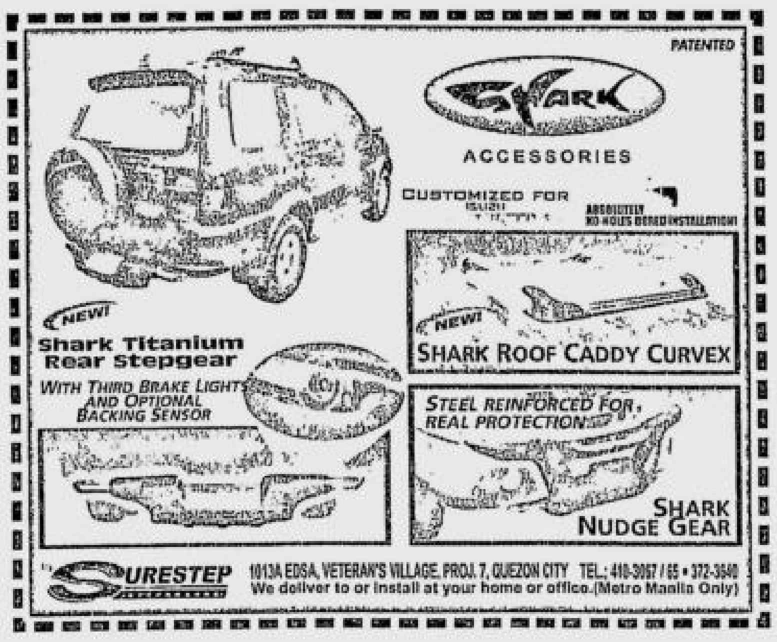
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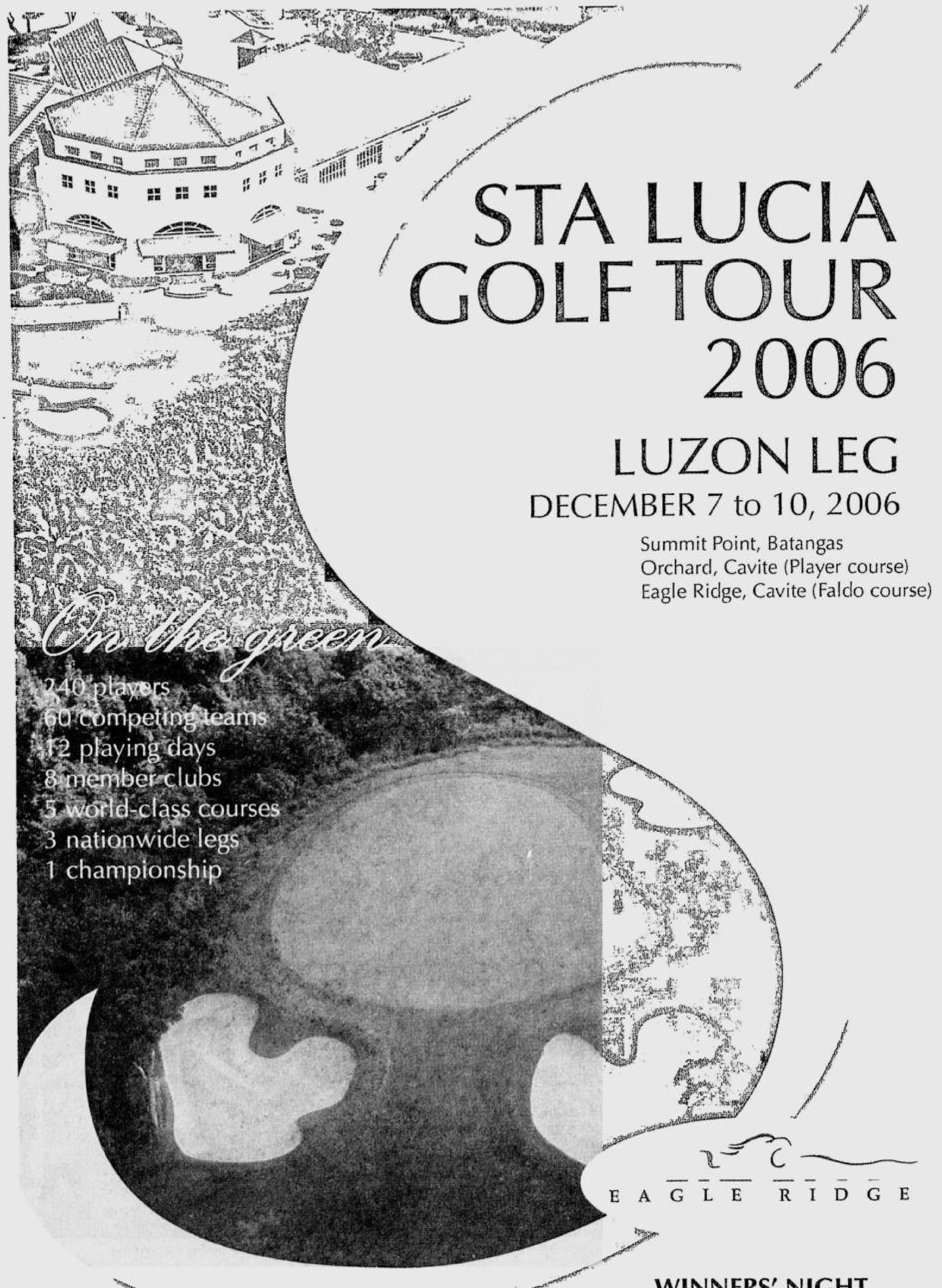
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Cebu to build ₱5-B 'trans-axial' highway

Malaysia's UEM Group keen on project

By Daxim L. Lucas

CEBU CITY—CEBU IS SHOWCASING ITS ABILITY TO host a global media event to try and attract foreign investors by announcing that it will soon embark on the construction of a P5-billion "trans-axial" highway.

Malaysia's UEM Group has already expressed interest in the project, but Cebu Gov. Gwendolyn Garcia wants to cast a wider net in search for a suitable contractor that will work on the island-long road network under a build-operate-transfer (BOT) scheme.

"We want the private sector to fund this, which is why we're opening the bidding to other interested parties," Garcia said during the opening of the Cebu International Convention Center yesterday.

The Cebu government is pulling all stops to impress foreign visitors with its infrastructure and economic prowess during the 12th Asean Summit.

Garcia described the project as a "trans-axial highway," which will connect the province's northernmost town of Daanbantayan to Santander in the south. The highway will bisect the cigar-shaped island, and all 47 towns and six cities will be connected to it via feeder roads.

Since it will be a BOT project, the governor said the highway will be operated by the winning contractor as a toll road.

She gave no details on the length of the concession the government will grant, but the national government in recent years has awarded other toll road operators 30-year contracts.

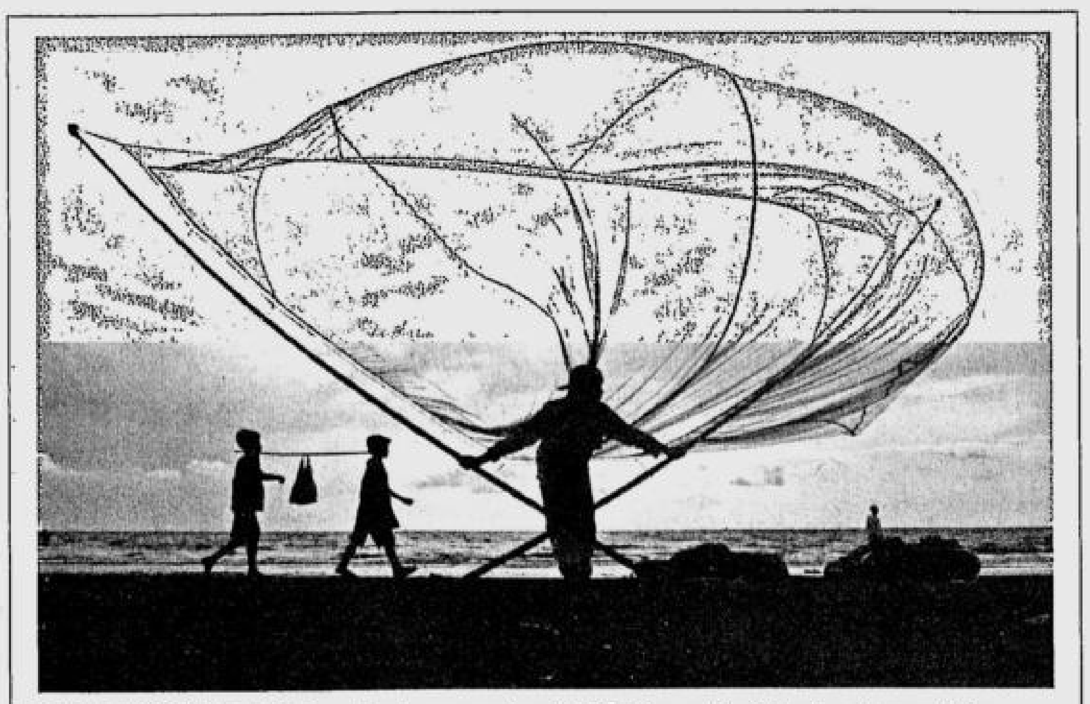
Garcia said representatives of the UEM Group approached her to express their desire to build the highway during a recent infrastructure convention in Hong Kong.

The UEM Group—originally United Engineers Malaysia Berhad—is a Malaysian construction conglomerate that now operates the Coastal Road toll highway linking Manila to Zapote.

For the Cebu project, Garcia said the government plans to maximize the potential of the highway, including the possibility of it having multiple lanes.

"We want a highway that will be functional for the next 30 years," she said, explaining that it will have to take into account the projected growth in traffic volume over the years.

Planning for the highway project began two years ago and is almost complete.



NINETEEN-YEAR-OLD Ivan Santos spreads out his fishing net for it to dry after catching small shrimps along the coastline of San Rafael 4, Long Beach, Noveleta, Cavite. EDWIN BACASMAS

Food security laid on Asean table

By Ronnel W. Domingo

CEBU CITY—A FISHERIES advocacy group yesterday called on Southeast Asian leaders to put equal emphasis on non-trade matters, such as food security, in their plan to accelerate economic integration by five years to 2015.

Initiatives of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations holding its 12th summit here include moves toward turning the 10-state bloc into a single production unit, starting with 11 priority sectors that include fisheries.

Arsenio Tanchuling, executive director of Tambuyog Development Center, said fisheries integration along Asean lines was a threat to the sustainability of regional

FOOD/ B3

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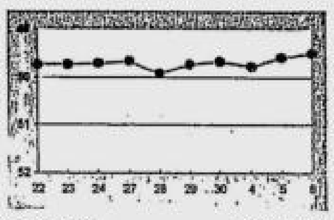

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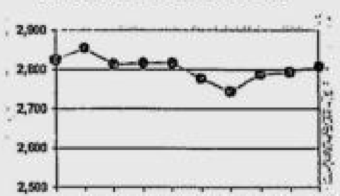

(See stock market report on Page B2)

Shares close 0.37% lower

SHARE PRICES YESTERDAY closed 0.37 percent lower due to profit-taking in the absence of strong leads, dealers said.

They said volumes were light as investors sat on the sidelines ahead of the scheduled listing next week of PNOC Energy Development Corp.

The composite index ended 10.30 points down at 2,797.79 after trading between 2,791.45 to 2,803.41.

The broader all-share index fell 3.67 points to 1,747.55.

Losers led gainers 49 to 44, while 54 stocks ended unchanged.

Turnover was 1.42 billion shares worth P2.41 billion ($46.67 million).

The local currency at midday traded at 49.542 to the dollar. *AFP*

Peso hits new 4½-yr high

By Doris C. Dumlao

THE PESO YESTERDAY rallied to its strongest level in four-and-a-half years, hitting 49.45 to the US dollar before closing at 49.50, as strong portfolio inflows and a weak US dollar continued to prop up the regional currency markets.

Remittances from overseas Filipino workers, which are seasonally strong ahead of the Christmas holidays, also supported the local currency, which gained 8 centavos from Tuesday's close of 49.58 to $1.

Yesterday's high was the best level hit by the peso since touching 49.25 in May 2002. Its closing rate was also the highest in four and a half years.

Volume turnover at the spot foreign exchange market, the Philippine Dealing System, amounted to $455.34 million.

Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas Governor Amando Tetangco Jr. said the peso continued to be supported by strong foreign exchange inflows to the country as well as other external factors.

"There are many external factors affecting the behavior of the exchange rate, such as the movement of other currencies like the US dollar and other major currencies," Tetangco said.

He added that a continuing surplus in the balance of payments through 2007 should also provide a stable supply of foreign exchange.

DMCI group wants to settle Maynilad's $300-M debt

By Christine A. Gaylican

THE CONSORTIUM OF DMCI HOLDings Inc. and Metro Pacific Project Corp., the new water concessionaire servicing Metro Manila's west zone, wants to settle the $300-million debt of Maynilad Water Services Inc. at the soonest time possible, a top executive said.

The settlement of Maynilad's debt to foreign and local bank creditors, as well as to the government regulator Metropolitan Waterworks and Sewerage System (MWSS), is covered under the debt and capital restructuring agreement (DCRA) that a rehabilitation court approved.

Maynilad's accumulated debt is supposed to be settled by 2013.

But according to DMCI's chief financial officer, Herbert Consunji, the same (DCRA) is preventing the members of the consortium from settling Maynilad's $300-million obligation to its creditors ahead of time.

"We are now constrained by the DCRA," Consunji told the INQUIRER. "We will settle this at the soonest possible time, and we will open discussions with creditors on how to go about this."

He said that if the DMCI-Metro Pacific group would strictly follow the timetable set under the DCRA, the group's borrowing capacity to finance its capital expenditures would be limited.

"The first order of the day would be to get out of rehabilitation," Consunji said. "The settlement of these debts would be at the top of our priority."

Macra Cruz, MWSS deputy administrator, explained that as the winning bidder that would take over the government's 83.97 percent stake in Maynilad, the DMCI-Metro Pacific group will have the option to use its bid offer of $447.23 million to settle Maynilad's obligations or use the amount to finance its capex over the next two to three years.

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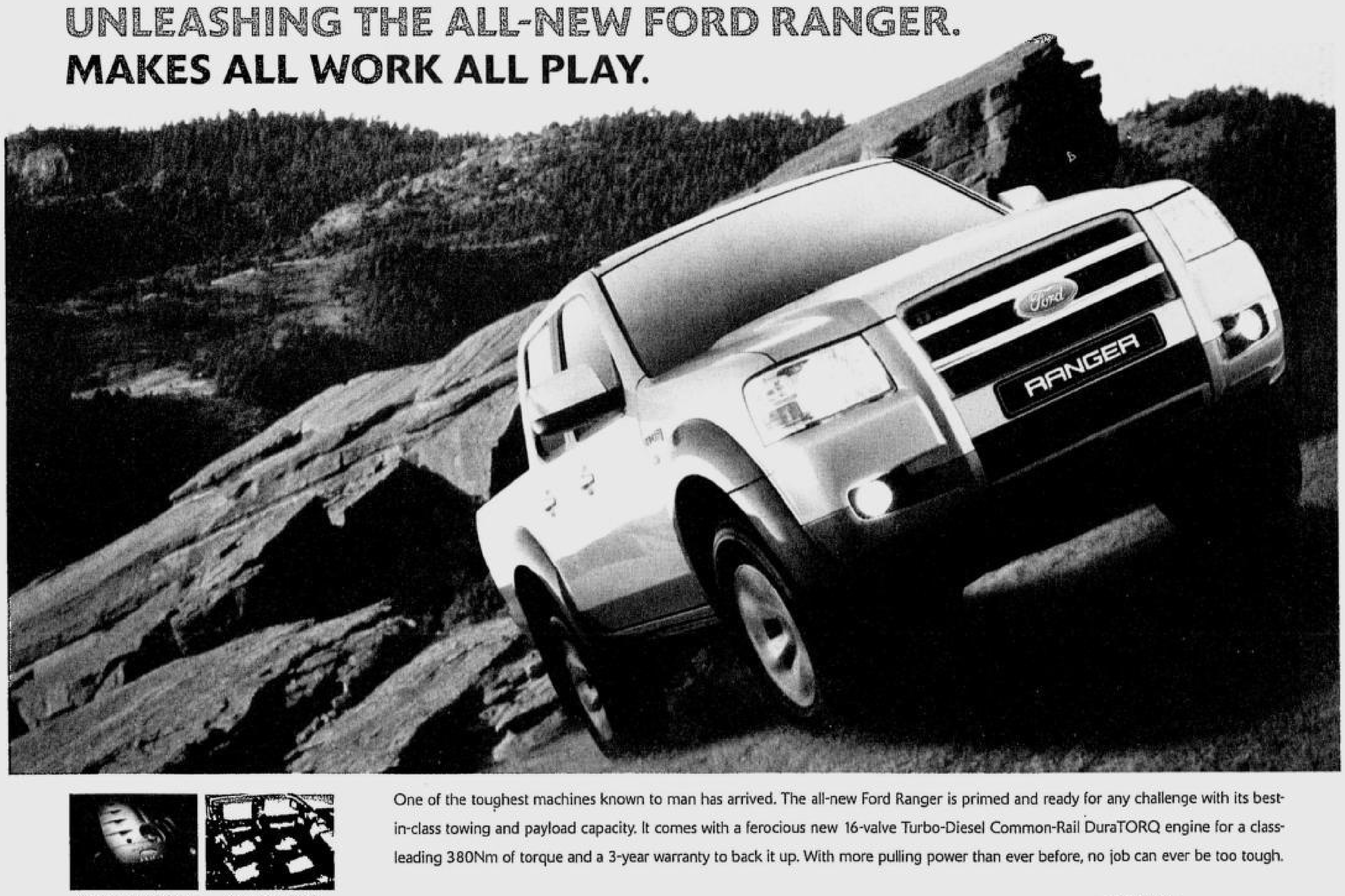

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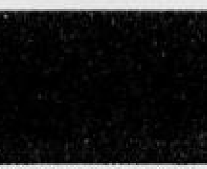
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Tech message

BREAKTIME

Conrado R. Banal III

THE LOPEZ GROUP'S ABS-CBN television network, running second in viewer ratings to GMA-7, is taking the network war up a notch by going digital next year.

That's the weapon ABS-CBN chairman and president Eugenio Lopez III (a.k.a. Gabby) will be wielding to challenge GMA-7 in the ratings game.

ABS-CBN is going to use technology to win the network war. And guess what? It's how most wars are won nowadays.

Anyway, ABS-CBN's explanation to the accusation of GMA-7 that ABS-CBN has been cheating in the ratings also has something to do with technology.

Recently, GMA-7 wrote to ad agencies, questioning the integrity of the rating agency—the British firm AGB Nielsen Media Research.

GMA-7 could not understand why, in the AGB Nielsen reports, ABS-CBN enjoyed "abnormally higher" ratings in cable TV than in "free" non-cable TV.

Cable TV subscribers, according to GMA-7, normally watch cable-only programs (such as ESPN and HBO), and not those on free TV (such as the shows of Kris Aquino or Willie Revillame on ABS-CBN).

GMA-7 complained that ABS-CBN was able to beat GMA-7 only in the ratings for cable TV.

So much so that ABS-CBN was able to wipe out the big lead of GMA-7 in the overall ratings—meaning, cable and non-cable combined.

In short, GMA-7 smelled something fishy.

As a counter to the GMA-7 offensive on ABS-CBN's cheating in the ratings, ABS-CBN also wrote ad agencies, saying it could no longer keep quiet about the issue.

For me, no letters to ad agencies, or even text messages, will do.

I wanted to talk to Gabby Lopez, who is touted to be next in line as patriarch of the ultra rich Lopez clan.

Okay, Gabby laid it down to me bluntly. He said that ABS-CBN really did not anticipate the onslaught of GMA-7 in the ratings game, admitting in effect that ABS-CBN has lost ground in the past couple of years.

But Gabby said that the publicly-listed ABS-CBN (versus the very private GMA-7) was now leading in the ratings outside Metro Manila.

True, ABS-CBN is taking a beating in Metro Manila.

Gabby claimed that with the recent changes in programming, ABS-CBN had already narrowed the gap.

And the final push for ABS-CBN will come from technology—i.e. the exciting digital platform. What's that—tech message?

Anyway, Gabby said he had no choice but to go hi-tech by introducing the digital platform here, even if it is still in its infancy in tech leaders like the United States.

ABS-CBN is betting on digital broadcast to improve its ratings, particularly among the free-TV viewers in Metro Manila, who Gabby believed had gone to GMA-7 because of ABS-CBN's poor reception in the metropolis.

Gabby said that ABS-CBN had a disadvantage from the beginning: its low-band frequency.

For the sake of our bright congressmen, ABS-CBN has the lowest of the low-band channels because it was assigned Channel 2.

Now, the low band channels (from Channels 2 to 6) are vulnerable to so-called broadcast noise.

A good example is the signal disturbance coming from electricity lines, which by the way are Meralco's, which ironically, is also controlled by the Lopez group.

And so Gabby blamed the low-band frequency of ABS-CBN for its lower ratings (at least lower than GMA-7's) in Metro Manila and the suburbs.

Digital technology will solve it for ABS-CBN. In the long-term! Which is actually still a long way!

* * *

ALL RIGHT, so they say that our untapped mineral resources (i.e. still under the ground) could be worth P2 to P3 trillion—easily.

And what are we doing? For one, we are making headway in the mining industry by having no clear policy on 1) the mining business itself and 2) how to mitigate its effects on the environment.

Almost 10 years ago, sure, Congress passed the Mining Code. But in no time at all, the code was questioned before the Supreme Court.

After a couple of years, the Supreme Court upheld its constitutionality.

This rejuvenated the mining industry somehow, and investors started coming in. And so that's the end of the story? Not quite!

Last Tuesday, we reported on another decision of the Supreme Court, which may yet again dampen interest in the industry.

We quoted UP law professor Harry L. Roque, director of the Institute of International Legal Studies of the UP Law Center, who talked about the case of Apex Mining vs Southeast Mindanao Gold Mining Corp. The Supreme Court decided in favor of Apex Mining. Roque said the decision was alarming investors again.

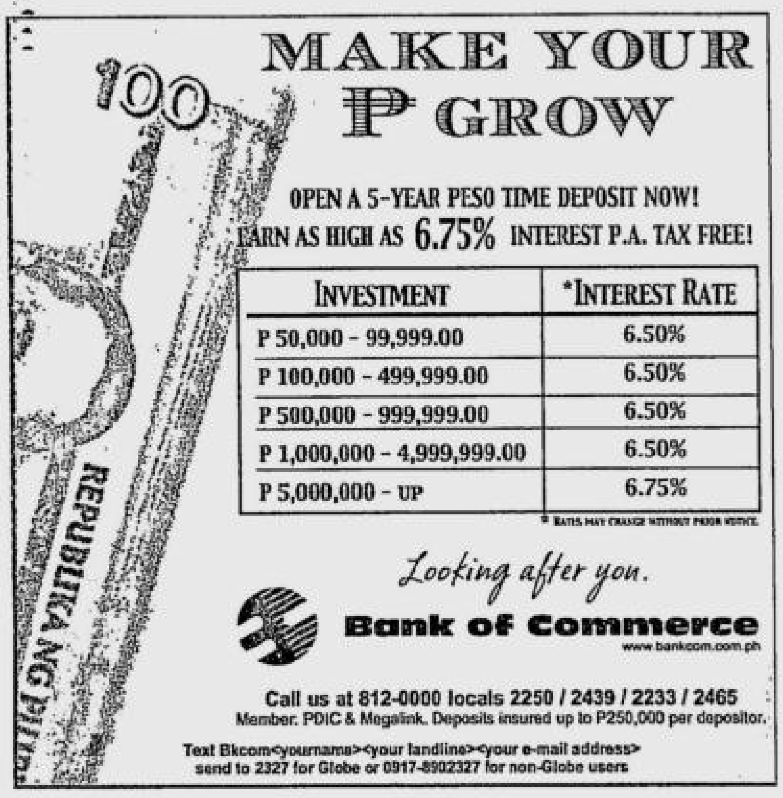
That's because, in effect, a division of the Supreme Court ruled that the law prohibited the transfer of "mineral rights." Roque believes that the ruling was against established jurisprudence that mineral rights were property rights (i.e. you can transfer them).

I thought that Roque made an important point. And that is, the Supreme Court en banc, and not just a division, should decide on such a big case.

To think, the new ruling even overturned other earlier rulings of the Supreme Court on cases involving the mining industry. Hmm.

Now, word in the mining industry has it that the Supreme Court is rushing the case. For instance, the Supreme Court scheduled the promulgation of its decision for Dec. 6, which was yesterday, although the Office of the Solicitor General had asked for an extension to file its comment, which should have scheduled the promulgation on Dec. 20.

Know what? Somebody is retiring from the Supreme Court very soon. And that somebody happens to chair the division that made the ruling.



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PF-GT-08	House and lot (TCT No. C-379263)	177	Lot 14 Blk. 25 Vista Verde North Ave. Phase I-D, Vista Verde North Executive Village, Caloocan City	P 851,500.00
PF-GT-09	House and lot (TCT No. 15584)	110	78-F Arandia, Brgy. Bagbagan, Muntinlupa City	P 726,100.00
PF-GT-10	House and lot (TCT No. T-150452)	321	Lot 26 Blk. 1, Quezon's Place Teoville West, San Dionisio (now BF Homes), Parañaque City	P 1,605,000.00
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PF-GT-11	Residential lot (TCT No. T-20417)	964	Brgy. Taculod (Sn. Vicente), Canaman	P 834,000.00
CAVITE				
PF-GT-12	Vacant residential lot (TCT No. T-1128619)	193	Lot 13 Blk 7, Maya St., Palo Alto, Habay I, Bacoor	P 772,000.00
PF-GT-13	House and lot (TCT No. 1109644)	104	Redwood St., Acacia Homes, Bangkal, Dasmariñas	P 411,000.00
PF-GT-14	House and lot (TCT No. 1128618)	164	Lot 44 Blk. 2, Juliard Homes II, Medicion 1st, Imus	P 823,600.00
LAGUNA				
AM-RT-138	House and lot (TCT No. T-470006)	80	Lot 6 Blk. 15, St. Joseph Village, Brgy. Butong, Cabuyao	P 504,600.00
STR-ERM	10 individually titled lots (TCT Nos. T-344369, T-344370, T-344371, T-344372, T-344373, T-344374, T-344375, T-344376 (road lot), T-342544, T-342545) with resort hotel and various improvements.	10,000	Brgy. Bagong Kalsada, Calamba City	P 37,000,000.00
PF-GT-15	House and lot (TCT No. 362555)	114	Lot 11 Blk. 5, Gemini St., Florence Ville Subd., Bo. Tagapo, Sta. Rosa	P 618,300.00
NEGROS OCCIDENTAL				
PF-GT-16	Residential lot (TCT No. T-152001)	1,119	Lot 7 Blk. 8, Fuentebella Subd., Brgy. Taculing, Bacolod City	P 895,200.00
PAGADIAN				
PF-GT-17	House & lot (TCT No.T-29,606)	298	Lot 4 Blk. 3, Sto. Niño District, Pagadian City	P 476,800.00
RIZAL			Roseville Subd., Brgy. San Juan Taytay	
AM-ML-139a	House & lot (TCT No.T-659829)	40	Lot 9 Blk. 10	P 116,000.00
AM-ML-139b	House & lot (TCT No.T-659835)	40	Lot 15 Blk. 10	P 116,000.00
AM-ML-139c	House & lot (TCT No.T-659837)	40	Lot 17 Blk. 10	P 116,000.00
AM-ML-139d	House & lot (TCT No T-659842)	63	Lot 22 Blk 10	P 149,200.00
AM-ML-139e	Residential lot (TCT No. T-659844)	75	Lot 2 Blk. 11	P 60,000.00
BAG-01	House & lot (TCT No.T-406230)	3,384	Lawaan St., San Jose, Rodriguez	P 3,677,040.00
(CHATTELS - Sale on "as is where is basis")				
AM-DE-140a	1-unit Lathe Machine, YAM-550		La Campana Compound, EDSA, Balintawak, Quezon City	P 82,050.00
AM-DE-140b	1-unit Presicion Surface Grinder Machine, Speedtec		La Campana Compound, EDSA, Balintawak, Quezon City	P 118,125.00
AM-DE-140c	1-unit Vertical Milling Machine, FIRST, Model LC-11/2 TM		La Campana Compound, EDSA, Balintawak, Quezon City	P 137,850.00
PF-GT-06	One (1) unit Toyota Revo 2002, GLX, w/ plate no. XFW 275		DBP Depot, Severina Compound, Parañaque City	P 380,000.00

Forms for negotiated offers may be obtained from AMD-Acquired Assets.

For inquiries, please call telephone numbers: 892-1566/893-7172 or 818-9511 local 2158/2159 for Code starting with AM, 815-1608 or 818-9511 local 2715 for PFGT, (074) 442-5308 or 818-9511 loc. 1403 for BAG and (049) 534-2820 to 21 for STR.

ASSET MANAGEMENT DEPARTMENT

(PDI December 7, 2006)

SMC sells 49% stake in Vietnam venture

By Elizabeth L. Sanchez

SAN MIGUEL FOOD and Beverage Ltd. (SMFB), a wholly-owned investment arm of beer giant San Miguel Corp. (SMC), sold its 49-percent stake in its hogs and feeds business in Vietnam to Hormel Netherlands BV for $20.5 million.

The sale leaves SMFB with just a 51-percent stake in San Miguel Pure Foods Investment BVI Ltd. (SMPFI), the parent company of San Miguel Pure Foods Vietnam Ltd., the food arm of San Miguel Pure Foods in Vietnam.

In a disclosure, SMC said the sale expands its partnership with Hormel Foods Corp.

The joint venture combines SMC's and Hormel's expertise in marketing, process, technology, thus accelerating SMC's expansion in Vietnam.

Hormel is SMC's longtime partner in processed meats and is a multinational manufacturer and marketer of consumer-branded meat and food products.

Last November 2004, San Miguel Pure Foods and Hormel Corp. inaugurated what was touted to be the largest meat manufacturing facility in Asia, the Purefoods-Hormel Cavite Plant.

Sitting on a 10-hectare property, the P2-billion plant can produce 320 metric tons of Purefoods hotdogs and 60 metric tons a day of Purefoods processed meats.

PHILIPPINE STOCK EXCHANGE

(As of December 6, 2006)

STOCKS	OPEN	HIGH	LOW	CLOSE	VOLUME
BANKS					
Asiatrust Dev. Bank Inc.	7.6	7.6	7.6	7.6	1,000
Banco de Oro Univ. Bank	45	45	44	44	424,900
Bank of the Phil. Islands	62.5	62.5	61.5	62	2,051,200
China Banking Corp.	700	705	695	695	2,480
Citystate Savings Bank	19	19	19	19	300
Export and Ind. Bank A	0.5	0.5	0.48	0.49	4,150,000
Equitable PCI Bank Inc.	78	78	77.5	78	41,400
Metropolitan Bank & Trust	49	49	47.5	47.5	1,482,600
Philippine National Bank	42	42	41.5	42	24,400
Phil. Savings Bank	48	48	48	48	1,000
Rizal Comm. Banking Corp.	24.5	26.5	24.5	26.5	251,900
Security Bank Corp.	65.5	67	65.5	67	44,100
Union Bank of the Phil.	50	50	49.5	49.5	1,400
OTHER FINANCIAL INSTITUTIONS					
Citiseconline.Com Inc.	4.85	4.85	4.75	4.75	235,000
First Metro Invest. Corp.	30.5	30.5	30.5	30.5	2,000
Manulife Financial Corp.	1650	1660	1640	1650	1,710
PCI Leasing & Fin. Inc.	1.34	1.34	1.34	1.34	230,000
Phil. Stock Exchange Inc.	262.5	262.5	262.5	262.5	1,000
Sun Life Financial Inc.	2120	2125	2120	2125	60
Ivantage Corp.	1.48	1.48	1.46	1.46	683,000
ELECTRICITY, ENERGY, POWER & WATER					
First Gen Corp.	54	54	52	52	73,100
First Phil Hldgs Corp.	52.5	52.5	51.5	51.5	534,800
Manila Electric Co. A	31.5	32	31.5	32	34,000
Manila Electric Co. B	33	33.5	32.5	33.5	708,800
Manila Water Co. Inc.	9.5	9.6	9.2	9.5	14,981,000
Petron Corp.	4	4.05	4	4.05	3,386,000
East Asia Power Res. Corp.	0.27	0.27	0.27	0.27	50,000
Trans-Asia Oil and Energy	1.04	1.06	1.04	1.04	46,000
FOOD, BEVERAGE & TOBACCO					
Bogo Medellin Milling Co.	35	35	35	35	600
Ginebra San Miguel Inc.	20.5	20.75	20.5	20.75	143,900
Jollibee Foods Corp.	40.5	41	40.5	40.5	1,177,100
RFM Corp.	1	1	1	1	120,000
Roxas Holdings, Inc.	3.15	3.15	3.1	3.1	83,000
San Miguel Corp. A	65.5	66	65	66	86,300
San Miguel Corp. B	73	73.5	73	73.5	118,000
Alliance Tuna Int'l. Inc.	2.08	2.14	2.06	2.06	1,759,000
Universal Robina Corp.	19.75	20	19.5	20	2,075,700
CONSTRUCTION, INFRASTRUCTURE & ALLIED SERVICES					
Southeast Asian Cement	1.08	1.14	1.06	1.08	32,156,000
Engineering Equip. Inc.	3	3.15	3	3.05	584,000
Fortune Cement Corp.	2.46	2.7	2.46	2.7	135,000
Holcim Philippines Inc.	7.4	7.6	7.3	7.6	6,057,000
Phil Nat'l Const. Corp.	5.6	5.6	5.5	5.5	11,000
Republic Cement Corp.	3.85	4.05	3.85	4.05	2,220,000
CHEMICALS					
Chemrez Technologies Inc.	5.3	5.3	4.95	5.2	12,999,000
Metro Alliance Holdings	0.36	0.36	0.36	0.36	70,000
Metro Alliance Hldgs B	0.36	0.36	0.36	0.36	10,000
DIVERSIFIED INDUSTRIALS					
Geograce Res. Phil. Inc.	0.72	0.76	0.71	0.76	138,210,000
Picop Resources Inc.	0.2	0.205	0.195	0.195	4,460,000
HOLDING FIRMS					
Abacus Con Res & Hdg A	0.008	0.008	0.008	0.008	20,000,000
Abacus Con Res & Hdg B	0.0085	0.0085	0.0085	0.0085	24,000,000
Ayala Corp.	492.5	495	492.5	492.5	815,450
Alsons Cons. Res. Inc.	0.61	0.61	0.61	0.61	100,000
Aboitiz Equity Ventures	6	6.1	6	6.1	199,000
Ajo.Net Holdings Inc.	0.0575	0.0575	0.0575	0.0575	6,600,000
A. Soriano Corp.	2.9	2.9	2.85	2.85	436,000
APC Group Inc.	0.31	0.33	0.3	0.33	1,620,000
Alcorn Gold Res. Corp.	0.0095	0.0095	0.0095	0.0095	36,000,000
Anglo Phil Holdings Corp.	0.91	0.91	0.89	0.89	630,000
ATN Holdings Inc.	1.7	2.32	1.7	2.24	1,123,000
Baguio Gold Holdings Corp.	3	3	3	3	28,000
Benpres Holdings Corp.	1.68	1.72	1.68	1.7	3,935,000
Filinvest Dev. Corp.	3.4	3.45	3.35	3.35	493,000
House of Investments Inc.	1.8	1.88	1.8	1.88	335,000
J.G. Summit Holdings Inc.	9.5	9.5	9.3	9.3	373,000
Mabuhay Holdings Corp.	0.32	0.32	0.32	0.32	200,000
Magnum Holdings Inc.	4	4.35	4	4.35	2,370,000
Multitech Inv. Corp.	1.66	1.68	1.64	1.66	1,346,000
Pacifica	0.02	0.02	0.02	0.02	6,500,000
Prime Orion Phils. Inc.	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.2	100,000
Prime Media Holdings Inc.	0.94	0.94	0.94	0.94	70,000
Republic Glass Hldg. Corp.	1.4	1.5	1.4	1.5	2,081,000
Sinophil Corp.	0.14	0.15	0.14	0.145	1,720,000
SM Investments Corp.	300	300	295	295	100,090
Unioil Res. & Holdings Co	0.165	0.18	0.165	0.175	5,440,000
Wellex Industries Inc.	0.125	0.125	0.125	0.125	800,000
PROPERTY					
Ayala Land Inc.	15	15	14.75	15	5,716,700
Belle Corp.	1.14	1.16	1.12	1.12	1,043,000
A Brown Co. Inc.	1.86	1.86	1.8	1.8	4,049,000
Crown Equities Inc.	0.4	0.4	0.4	0.4	1,500,000
Cebu Holdings, Inc.	3.05	3.05	3.05	3.05	225,000
C&P Homes Inc.	1.46	1.46	1.4	1.42	552,000
Cyber Bay Corp.	0.35	0.35	0.35	0.35	170,000
Empire East Land Inc.	0.52	0.53	0.52	0.53	2,440,000
Edsa Prop. Holdings Inc.	1.54	1.6	1.54	1.6	266,000
Ever-Gotesco Resources	0.0625	0.0625	0.0625	0.0625	1,000,000
Filinvest Land Inc.	1.72	1.74	1.72	1.74	9,754,000
Highlands Prime Inc.	2.6	2.65	2.6	2.6	40,000
Interport Res.	0.007	0.007	0.007	0.007	1,000,000
Interport Res. B	0.007	0.007	0.007	0.007	22,000,000
Kuok Phil. Properties	0.51	0.54	0.51	0.51	7,200,000
Fil-Estate Land Inc.	0.7	0.71	0.7	0.7	2,190,000
Megaworld Corp.	2.2	2.28	2.2	2.22	105,888,000
MRC Allied Ind. Inc.	0.36	0.39	0.36	0.39	720,000
Robinsons Land Corp.	16.5	16.5	16.25	16.5	227,400
Phil Realty and Holdings	0.71	0.73	0.69	0.7	39,260,000
SM Development Corp.	2.46	2.46	2.4	2.42	265,000
SM Prime Holdings Inc.	9.9	10	9.9	9.9	11,250,000
Suntrust Home Dev. Inc.	0.59	0.59	0.59	0.59	280,000
Uniwide Holdings Inc.	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1	300,000
MEDIA					
ABS-CBN Broadcasting Corp.	19.5	19.75	19.5	19.5	155,100
Manila Bulletin Pub. Corp.	1.02	1.02	1.02	1.02	20,000
TELECOMMUNICATIONS					
Digital Telecom Phils Inc.	1.62	1.64	1.62	1.64	9,624,000
Globe Telecom Inc	1250	1265	1245	1265	54,220
Pilipino Tel. Corp.	6	6	5.9	6	3,051,000
Phil. Long Dis Tel Co.	2500	2505	2485	2495	135,070
INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY					
Boulevard Holdings Inc.	0.175	0.18	0.17	0.18	17,480,000
Ionics Inc.	2.02	2.02	2.02	2.02	260,000
IPVG Corp.	3.75	4.1	3.75	3.85	5,091,000
Music Semiconductors Corp.	1.18	1.18	1.18	1.18	64,000
Transpacific Broadband	4.9	5.5	4.9	5.4	854,000
Philweb Corp.	0.031	0.031	0.03	0.031	61,600,000
TRANSPORTATION SERVICES					
Asian Terminals Inc.	4.15	4.15	4.15	4.15	263,000
Aboitiz Trans. Sys. Corp.	1.14	1.14	1.14	1.14	25,000
Int'l Container Term'l Sv	19.25	19.75	19.25	19.75	706,500
Keppel Phils. Marine, Inc.	0.96	0.96	0.96	0.96	10,000
Lorenzo Shipping Corp.	1.3	1.3	1.3	1.3	210,000
HOTEL & LEISURE					
Leisure & Resorts Corp.	2.16	2.26	2.14	2.26	4,142,000
Premere Ent. Prod. Inc.	0.34	0.34	0.34	0.34	3,060,000
Philippine Racing Club	3.1	3.1	3.1	3.1	191,000
Waterfront Phils. Inc.	0.56	0.59	0.56	0.58	2,910,000
EDUCATION					
Centro Escolar University	8.6	9	8.6	9	10,000
Ipeople Inc.	2.9	2.9	2.9	2.9	60,000
DIVERSIFIED SERVICES					
Macroasia Corp.	2.2	2.22	2.1	2.1	921,000
Paxys Inc.	18	18.25	17.75	18.25	199,800
Philcomsat Holdings Corp.	1.38	1.38	1.38	1.38	8,000
MINING & OIL					
MINING					
Apex Mining Co. Inc. A	6.4	6.4	6.2	6.2	522,000
Apex Mining Co. Inc. B	6.6	6.6	6.4	6.4	205,000
Abra Mining & Industrial	0.011	0.011	0.011	0.011	174,600,000
Atlas Cons. Min & Dev't	8	8.1	8	8	5,549,000
Benguet Corp. A	9	9	9	9	10,000
Lepanto Cons Mng. Co. A	0.25	0.26	0.25	0.25	13,120,000
Lepanto Cons. Mng. Co B	0.27	0.28	0.27	0.28	670,000
Manila Mining Corp. A	0.021	0.022	0.021	0.021	138,100,000
Manila Mining Corp. B	0.023	0.024	0.023	0.024	66,500,000
Omico Corp.	0.011	0.011	0.011	0.011	313,100,000
Philex Mining Corp.	4.3	4.3	4.2	4.2	2,443,000
Semirara Mining Corp.	20.25	20.25	20.25	20.25	138,000
United Paragon Mining Co.	0.55	0.55	0.55	0.55	500,000
Vulcan Ind'l	0.88	0.9	0.88	0.89	5,770,000
OIL					
Basic Petroleum Corp.	0.25	0.26	0.25	0.26	1,080,000
The Philodrill Corp. A	0.99	0.99	0.98	0.98	650,000
The Philodrill Corp. B	0.98	0.98	0.98	0.98	500,000
Petroenergy Res. Corp.	10	10.25	10	10	98,000
PREFERRED					
Ayala Corp. Pref. B	107	107	107	107	8,280

CURRENCIES

December 6, 2006

Country	Unit	Euro Equivalent	Dollar Equivalent	Peso Equivalent
United States	Dollar	0.750413	1.000000	49.6120
Japan	Yen	0.006538	0.008712	0.4322
United Kingdom	Pound	1.481540	1.974300	97.9490
Hong Kong	Dollar	0.096568	0.128687	6.3844
Switzerland	Franc	0.629858	0.839349	41.6418
Canada	Dollar	0.657392	0.876040	43.4621
Singapore	Dollar	0.487281	0.649351	32.2156
Australia	Dollar	0.589298	0.785299	38.9603
Bahrain	Dinar*	1.990643	2.652731	131.6073
Saudi Arabia	Rial	0.200131	0.266695	13.2313
Brunei	Dollar	0.485704	0.647249	32.1113
Indonesia	Rupiah	0.000083	0.000110	0.0055
Thailand	Baht	0.021108	0.028129	1.3955
UAE	Dirham	0.204333	0.272294	13.5090
Euro	Euro	1.000000	1.332600	66.1130
Korea	Won	0.000812	0.001082	0.0537
China	Yuan**	0.095939	0.127848	6.3428
Argentina	Peso	0.245714	0.327439	16.2449
Brazil	Real	0.348640	0.464598	23.0496
Denmark	Kroner	0.134151	0.178769	8.8691
India	Rupee	0.016893	0.022512	1.1169
Malaysia	Ringgit	0.211087	0.281294	13.9556
Mexico	New Peso	0.069115	0.092102	4.5694
New Zealand	Dollar	0.514475	0.685589	34.0134
Norway	Kroner	0.123079	0.164015	8.1371
Pakistan	Rupee	0.012322	0.016420	0.8146
South Africa	Rand	0.105707	0.140865	6.9886
Sweden	Kroner	0.110703	0.147523	7.3189
Syria	Pound	0.014456	0.019264	0.9557
Taiwan	Nt Dollar	0.023240	0.030969	1.5364
Venezuela	Bolivar	0.000350	0.000466	0.0231

Source: Reuters' forex closing prices as of NY Time—Dec. 5, 2006
* Various banks in Bahrain as quoted in Reuters' Screen
** Asian Time Closing Rate as of 05-Dec-06

HGC to issue ₱6B worth of zero coupon bonds

Guaranty firm completes ₱12-B borrowing program

By Michelle V. Remo

STATE-OWNED HOME GUARANTEE CORP. (HGC) will issue P6 billion worth of zero coupon bonds tomorrow to raise the other half of its P12-billion borrowing requirement.

Gonzalo B.A. Bongolan, HGC president, said proceeds of the bond sale would be used to pay off maturing obligations, boost marketing of its disposable assets and service guarantee calls.

HGC, as stated under Republic Act No. 8763, is tasked to operate a credit guaranty program to support the government's efforts to promote home ownership.

HGC provides guaranty to housing loans extended by financial institutions to housing loan borrowers.

HGC raised the first P6 billion of its borrowing requirement through the sale of zero coupon bonds last Nov. 22.

That auction was the second attempt to raise the first tranche of the P12-billion borrowing program.

The first auction failed after HGC officials rejected bids because the rates sought by investors were deemed too high.

The zero coupon bonds fetched a yield of 6.375 percent during the Nov. 22 auction, slightly better than the 6.5 percent quoted during the October auction.

The November bond issue attracted P11.99 billion worth of bids, making the debt offering oversubscribed by almost P6 billion.

According to a memorandum issued by the Bureau of the Treasury, the underwriters for tomorrow's bond issue are Philippine Commercial Capital Inc., AB Capital and Investment Corp., Multinational Investment Bancorporation, RCBC Capital Corp. and SB Capital Investment Corp.

The bonds will carry a sovereign guarantee, which means that the national government will pay the bondholders in case HGC defaults.

The BTr memo said an interest of up to 10.15 percent a year shall be exempt from taxes, but yields in excess of 10.15 percent shall be subject to the 20-percent final withholding tax.

The interest rate on the bonds will be determined during the auction.

HGC's bond issue was purposely scheduled after the sale of Retail Treasury Bonds (RTBs) last Tuesday.

Bongolan said HGC did not want to compete for the investors' interest.

Bongolan said HGC's total liabilities currently stand at around P20 billion, which would be partially serviced by the proceeds of the bond issue.

Of the P20 billion, P13.5 billion are in maturing bonds, while the remaining P6.5 billion are in the form of guaranty obligations.

HGC's total assets currently have a book value of P23 billion. Of the amount, P5 billion are composed of residential properties, while the rest are commercial and industrial.

HGC hopes to immediately sell these assets to boost the company's cash reserves.

The HGC chief said the state-owned firm sold P2.8 billion worth of assets this year, up from P2.4 billion last year.

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Food ...

From page B1

seafood supply as well as to the livelihood of some 20 million small-scale fishers in the region.

Tanchuling said this was a grave concern for Southeast Asian nations, considering that some 70 percent of total animal protein consumed in the region comes from the sea.

"The Asean roadmap for fisheries integration is based on an overall free-trade economic strategy that fails to consider the biological limits to fisheries productivity," he said.

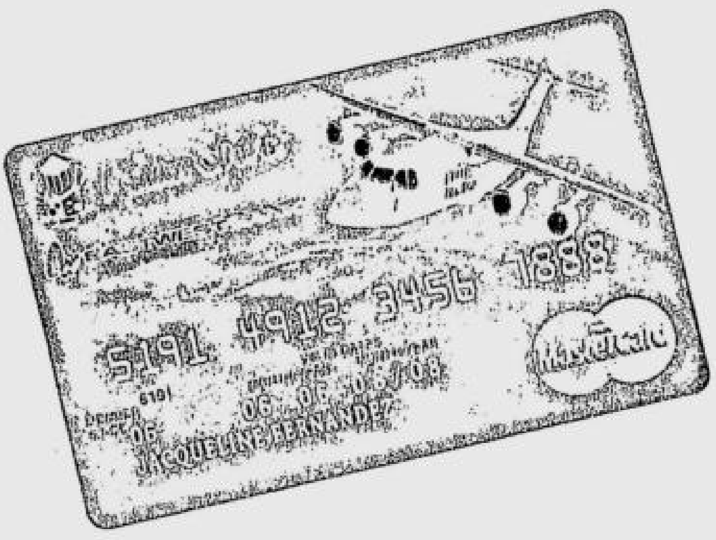
Tanchuling, who is also coordinator for the Southeast Asian Fish for Justice Network or SEAfish, said the roadmap also failed to consider the consequent danger that the free flow of fishery products within and out of the region would lead to overfishing, even to the "collapse" of fisheries production.

SEAfish is a network of 14 non-government organizations and peoples' organizations in the region which, in particular, opposes complete trade liberalization in fisheries at the expense of small fishers.

"Asean (as a group, and members as individual economies, have) no effective fisheries management system," he said. "One serious effect of this lack is that two species of tuna—bluefin tuna and bigeye tuna—and several other migratory fish such as roundscad and sardines are now either endangered or overfished."

Tanchuling called on the Philippine government to adopt a fisheries exclusion list that covers 87 marine products, which he said must be spared from the export-oriented tendency of liberalization.

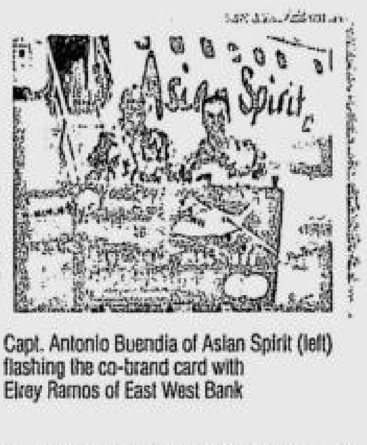
He said the proposed exclusion list includes many Filipino favorites such as galunggong, tamban, sapsap, hasa-hasa, dalagang bukid, small shrimp (used to make alamang or shrimp paste) and others that are served in most Filipino homes.



Executives and staff of Asian Spirit, East West Bank and MasterCard Worldwide gathered last September to commemorate their partnership.

(L-R) Alex Ilagan - SVP East West Bank, Capt. Antonio Buendia - President Asian Spirit, Poch Villa-Real - VP & Sr. Country Manager MasterCard Worldwide, Elrey Ramos - Vice Chairman & CEO East West Bank, Jack Po - EVP Asian Spirit

Capt. Antonio Buendia of Asian Spirit (left) handing token airplane to Poch Villa-Real of MasterCard Worldwide

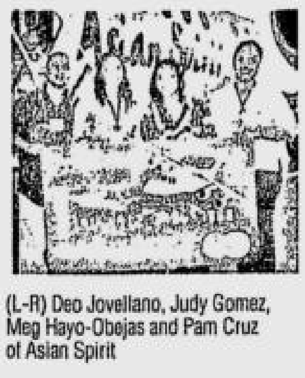


Capt. Antonio Buendia of Asian Spirit (left) flashing the co-brand card with Elrey Ramos of East West Bank

East West Bank SVP-Retail Credit Group Head Alex Ilagan

(L-R) Rodolfo Garcia of Asian Spirit, Rafly Simpao of East West Bank, Anton Corro of MasterCard Worldwide, Dennis Zamora of East West Bank

East West Bank VP-Card Products Division Head Jackie Fernandez



(L-R) Deo Jovellano, Judy Gomez, Meg Hayo-Obejas and Pam Cruz of Asian Spirit

The proud and hardworking Cards Team of East West Bank L-R: (top) Malcolm Cobarrubias, Sally Macaraeg, Marlon Reodica, (middle) Rafly Simpao, Amie Gonzalez, Rea Magsino, (bottom) Desmelyn Tomas, Lino Hilario, Jackie Fernandez, Alex Ilagan, PJ Rodriguez, Oscar Navidad, Dennis Zamora, Efren dela Cruz

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With the new Asian Spirit East West Bank MasterCard, exploring our country's vacation sights from north to south is made more affordable. Cardholders enjoy a straight 20% discount on all Asian Spirit domestic regular or promo fares, whether purchased from any Asian Spirit ticket office nationwide or booked through the reservations hotline at 855-3333 using their card. Cardholders also enjoy the lowest fare possible whenever Super Saver Fares is available on certain domestic flights even when the seat quota restriction is already full provided that the flight is not fully booked.

Waiting and queuing at the airport can now be avoided because Asian Spirit East West Bank MasterCard cardholders are given priority when checking-in at any Asian Spirit airport counter nationwide.

On top of all these unique benefits, cardholders also enjoy a Rewards Program that gives them 1 Rewards point for every P50 spend. Points can be used to redeem vacation-related items, FREE Asian Spirit tickets and special Asian Spirit vacation packages. A vacation perks program has also been designed for cardholders to enjoy perks and discounts on room rates and meals from partner resorts and establishments in Boracay and other popular Asian Spirit vacation destinations when they use their card. Plus, with MasterCard's worldwide acceptance, shopping with your Asian Spirit East West Bank MasterCard has become easy and convenient with over 29 million establishments here and abroad.

So take off on your next vacation with Asian Spirit East West Bank MasterCard!

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EASTWESTBANK
www.eastwestbanker.com

PNOC EXPLORATION CORPORATION

Building 1, Energy Center, Merritt Road, Fort Bonifacio, Taguig, Metro Manila
Telephone Nos. 893 6001 to 47 local 2104
Direct Line: 840 1614/Fax No.: (632) 840 1619

PNOC
The Energy Company

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

PNOC Exploration Corporation (PNOC EC), through its Corporate Budget, intends to apply the sum of Four Million Six Hundred Fourteen Thousand Six Hundred Ten and 88/100 Pesos (Php 4,614,610.88) being the Approved Budget for the Contract (ABC) to payments under the contract for **THE COMPANY'S MALANGAS COAL PROJECT'S JANITORIAL AND GENERAL MANPOWER SERVICES CONTRACT** (the "Project"). Bids received in excess of the ABC shall be automatically rejected at the bid opening.

PNOC EC now invites sealed bids from eligible bidders for the **janitorial and general manpower services contract for the Company's Malangas Coal Project** located in Malangas, Zamboanga Sibugay Province. The contract duration for the Project is one (1) year.

Bidding will be conducted though open competitive bidding procedures using non-discretionary pass/fail criteria specified in the Implementing Rules and Regulations Part A (IRR-A) of Republic Act 9184 (R.A. 9184), otherwise known as the "Government Procurement Reform Act", and is restricted to Filipino citizens/sole proprietorships, organizations with at least sixty (60%) precent interest or outstanding capital stock belonging to citizens of the Philippines, and to citizens or organizations of a country the laws or regulations of which grant similar rights or privileges to Filipino citizens, pursuant to Republic Act 5183 (R.A. 5183) and subject to Commonwealth Act 138 (C.A. 138). Only bids from bidders who pass the eligibility check will be opened. The bidder with the lowest calculated bid shall advance to the post-qualification stage in order to finally determine responsiveness of the bid to technical and financial requirements of the Project. The contract shall then be awarded to the Lowest Calculated and Responsive Bidder who was determined as such during the post-qualification procedure.

A complete set of bidding documents may be purchased by interested bidders from PNOC EC's Procurement Section (c/o Ms. J. C. Fabian) starting December 7, 2006 at the PNOC EC Head Office located in Building 1, Energy Center, Merritt Road, Fort Bonifacio, Taguig City upon payment of a non-refundable fee in the amount of One Thousand Pesos (Php1,000.00).

For purpose of clarifying certain issues, a Pre-bid Conference shall be held on **December 18, 2006 at 3:00 P.M.** at the Malangas Coal Terminal in Malangas, Zamboanga Sibugay Province.

Bids and eligibility requirements must be submitted in three (3) sets each to PNOC EC's Bids and Awards Committee not later than **3:00 p.m. on January 4, 2007**. The bids including the eligibility requirements shall be publicly opened immediately thereafter. Late bids shall not be accepted.

PNOC EC reserves the right to accept or reject any bid, to annul the bidding process, and to reject all bids at any time prior to contract award, without thereby incurring any liability to the affected bidder or bidders.

This publication is also posted in our website at www.pnoc-ec.com.ph and in the DBM website at www.procurementservice.net.

The Chairman
Bids and Awards Committee

(PDI--Dec. 7 & 11, 2006)

CAGELCO II

INVITATION TO PRE-QUALIFY AND TO BID

The **CAGAYAN II ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE, INC. (CAGELCO II)** is inviting all interested contractors to pre-qualify and to bid for the **SUPPLY OF MATERIALS AND CONSTRUCTION OF A 69 KV SUB-TRANSMISSION LINE FROM LUCBAN, ABULUG TO CENTRO, SANCHEZ MIRA WITH A TOTAL LENGTH OF 37.5 KMS.**

The 69KV Sub-transmission line will utilize 73.3 ft. pre-stressed rectangular I Section Concrete Pole.

Bidding will be conducted through open competitive bidding procedures. Interested bidders shall comply with Accreditation Requirements (for submission to the Accreditation Committee Chairman, Clarence E. Jacinto) as follows:

a. Company Profile
b. Business Registration
c. Business Permit
d. BIR/VAT Certificate
e. Latest Income Tax Return (ITR)
f. List of Clients for a period of three (3) years
g. Financial Statement

And must be able to pay Php 10,000.00 (for this particular bidding only and not refundable) for bid documents during the pre-bid conference.

Schedule of activities are as follows:

BIDDING SCHEDULE	
Release of Invitation to Bid (two publications)	December 7 and 8, 2006
Intent to Respond Forms Due	December 14, 2006
Accreditation Period	December 15 to 24, 2006
Pre-Bid Conference	January 04, 2007
Conduct of Public Bidding	January 15, 2007

CAGELCO II reserves the right to reject any/or all bid without any reason, waive any formality therein, accepts proposal most advantageous to the cooperative and assumes no obligation to compensate or indemnify any bidder for expenses or losses that may be incurred in the preparation of bid nor does it guarantee that an award will be made.

(Sgd.) **BLANDINA Y. MADAMBA**
ISD Manager/PBAC Chairman

Noted by: **GABRIEL A. TORDESILLAS**
General Manager

CAGAYAN II ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE, INC.
Macanaya District, Aparri, Cagayan
Tel. No. (078) 888-2173 • Telefax No. (078) 888-2940
E-mail: cagelco2main@digitelone.com
Website: www.cagelco2.org.ph

(PDI - Dec. 7 & 8, 2006)

Republic of the Philippines
Office of the President
Housing and Urban Development Coordinating Council
HOUSING AND LAND USE REGULATORY BOARD
Region 4-A

NOTICE

CORINTHIAN COMMERCIAL CORPORATION (Part Owner & Developer) and **SUNVAR REALTY AND DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION** (Owner) by virtue of a "Joint Venture Agreement" has filed with this Board a sworn registration statement for the sale of lot at **CORINTHIAN HOMES (Main Project)** and house and lot at **GARDEN CITY 4 (Socialized Housing)** both located at **Brgy. Macabling, City of Sta. Rosa, Laguna** specifically described as Lots 1418-A-1 and 1418-A-2 all of Psd-04-158345 and Lot 1419, Sta. Rosa Estate covered by TCT Nos. 615760, 615763 & 614283.

All papers relative thereto shall upon request and payment of processing fee is available for inspection during business hours by any person having legal interest thereon.

Absent legal impediment, the above-cited project is deemed and a certificate in evidence thereof shall forthwith be issued after two (2) weeks from last day of publication.

Quezon City, Metro Manila 27 November, 2006.

(Sgd.) **BELEN G. CENIZA**
Director

(PDI–Nov. 30 & Dec. 7, 2006)

REPUBLIC OF THE PHILIPPINES
SOCIAL HOUSING FINANCE CORPORATION
a subsidiary of National Home Mortgage Finance Corporation

INVITATION TO PREQUALIFY AND BID

The **Social Housing and Finance Corporation (SHFC)** located at the 4th Floor, Filomena Bldg., 104 Amorsolo St., Legaspi Village, Makati City is inviting interested parties to prequalify and participate in the forthcoming public bidding for the network design; and equipment supply and installation of the following projects:

1. **Digital Communication System (PABX-Including Testing and Commissioning)**
2. **Structured Cabling with voice and data (Active components included)**

Bidders may bid for any or all of the above items.

Submission of prequalification documents (company profile and list of relevant past projects) is from **December 11 to December 13, 2006 at Management Services Group (MSG)**. Prospective bidders shall be advised in due course of the results of their application for the prequalification.

Only bidders who are pre-qualified can get copies of the Terms of Reference (TOR) and can participate in the bidding. The pre-bid conference, submission and opening of bids shall be announced later.

The SHFC reserves the right to reject any or all bids, disqualify any bidder or to accept bids as may be considered most advantageous to the corporation or annul the bidding process anytime prior to the award of the bid without incurring any liability to the affected bidders or stating the grounds for SHFC action.

For further information/clarification, please contact **Mr. Arthur L. Rosales** at tel. no. **8925441** or **8931501** local **286.**

(Sgd.) **ATTY. FERMIN T. ARZAGA**
President

(PDI–Dec. 7, 2006)

Republic of the Philippines
Province of La Union
Municipality of Santo Tomas

INVITATION TO BID

1. The Municipality of Santo Tomas, La Union invites sealed bids from eligible sources for the Improvement of Bali – Pongpong Barangay Road located at Bali - Pongpong, Sto. Tomas, La Union with an Approved Budget for the Contract (ABC) amounting to Three Million Pesos (Php 3,000,000.00) under R.A. 7171 (Congressional Fund)
2. Bidding documents may be purchased starting December 5, 2006 to December 19, 2006 from 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. at the Office of the BAC Secretariat / Office of the Municipal Engineer, Municipal Building, Santo Tomas, La Union upon payment of a nonrefundable fee of Two Thousand Pesos (Php 2,000.00) or its equivalent in a freely convertible currency, for each set. Interested bidders may obtain further information at the same address.
3. Bid shall be valid for a period of thirty (30) days after bid opening and must be accompanied by a Bid Security in a form of cash, certified/cashier's or manager check (1 %), or bank guarantee (1 ½ %) or its equivalent in a convertible currency, and shall be delivered to the Office of the Municipal Treasurer, Municipal Building, Santo Tomas, La Union on or before December 19, 2006 at exactly 10:00 o'clock in the morning.
4. Opening of the bid shall be on December 19, 2006, 10:00 AM at the People's Hall, Santo Tomas, La Union.
5. The Municipality of Santo Tomas reserves the right to accept or reject any bid, to annul the bidding process, and to reject all bids at any time prior to contract award, without thereby incurring any liability to the affected bidder or bidders.

(Sgd.) **ENGR. GODOFREDO V. JAPSON**
BAC Chairman

Certified by:
(Sgd.) **MARILOU G. CRUZ**
Head, BAC Secretariat

(PDI--Dec. 7, 2006)

Republic of the Philippines
DEPARTMENT OF LABOR AND EMPLOYMENT
National Capital Region
DY Int'l Bldg., 1650 San Marcelino
cor. General Malvar St., Malate, Manila

NOTICE OF FILING OF APPLICATION/S FOR ALIEN EMPLOYMENT PERMIT/S (AEP/S)

Notice is hereby given that the following companies/employers have filed with this Regional Office application/s for Alien Employment Permit/s.

Name and address of Company/Employer	Name of Foreign National	Position
JIANMEI TRADING LTD. CO. 563 Juan Luna St., Binondo, Manila	Hongyong Cai	Supervisor
JIANMEI TRADING LTD. CO. 563 Juan Luna St., Binondo, Manila	Qiaomei Chen	Consultant
JINDALLE CORPORATION 118 Real St., Pamplona, Las Piñas City	Tae Suk Kim (w/o Park)	Vice President
DELL INTERNATIONAL SERVICES PHILIPPINES INC. 27/F, RCBC Plaza, Tower 2, Ayala Ave. cor. Sen. Gil J. Puyat Ave., Makati City	Gaurav Bhatil	Technical Support Manager II
TELETECH CUSTOMER CARE MANAGEMENT PHILIPPINES INC. Bldg. F, SM Corporate Offices, 1000 Bay Boulevard, SM Central Business Park, Bay City, Pasay City	David Wendel Robinson	Compliance and Information Security Manager
MANILA PENINSULA HOTEL, INC. Corner Ayala and Makati Avenues, Makati City	Bernd Beltmann	Pastry Chef
FUJIKURA ASIA LIMITED – MANILA REPRESENTATIVE Unit 1706 Antel 2000 Corporate Centre, Valero St., Bel-Air Makati City	Koji Ono	Chief Representative
NEC TELECOM SOFTWARE PHILS. INC. 2/F Bonifacio Technology Center, Bonifacio Global City, Taguig City	Jinichi Tanaka	Software Design Manager
LEE CLUB TEMPTATION INC. 1406 Roxas Blvd., cor. Salud St., Brgy. 004, Pasay City	Sungho Suh	General Manager
COLEMAN POWERMATE INTERNATIONAL, INC. Unit 1005 Centerpoint Bldg., Julia Vargas Ave., Ortigas Center, Pasig City	David Jean Paul Nouvelot	General Manager
MITSUBISHI HEAVY INDUSTRIES PHILIPPINES INC. 24/F Yuchengco Tower, RCBC Plaza, Sen. Gil Puyat Ave., Makati City	Hiroaki Katsuya	Concrete Engineer

If you have any information/objection to the above mentioned application/s please communicate with the Regional Director.

LOURDES M. TRASMONTE
Regional Director

(PDI – December 7, 2006)

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OBITUARIES

Nineteenth Death Anniversary
of

JAIME V. ONGPIN

June 15, 1938 – December 7, 1987

In Loving Memory
on his FIRST DEATH ANNIVERSARY

RODOLFO C. BARROGA, JR.

Major **0-10481 PA**

His bereaved wife **Helen Sumalee**; children **Maria Lourdes Alejandria** and **Maria Francesca Alexandra**; parents, brothers, sisters, parents-in-law, brothers-in-law, sisters-in-law, children-in-law, other relatives and friends request the pious readers to pray for the eternal repose of his soul.

Mass will be held today, 7 December 2006, 2:00 p.m.
at The Heritage Park, Taguig City.

We design obituaries for free.

JUAN ALVAREZ ALONZO

John

January 24, 1920 - December 2, 2006

Former Mayor of Ballesteros, Cagayan
Former RTC Judge of Tabuk, Kalinga Apayao

Beloved husband to *Charing Cartagena*;
father to *Carlo, Johnby, Pinky, Pat* (†), *Mayyang,*
Pia, Seg, Val, Peking & Jugo,
father-in-law to *Linda, Marie, Ray, Terry,*
Paddy, Jo Ann & Bhel;
Papa *Jaju* to grandchildren *Johnjohn, Letlet, Paolo,*
Richard, Mike, Patrick, Dana, Ian, Jeric, Angelica,
Nadine, Micaela, Dominic, Alec (†), *Matthew, Xavier,*
Chavelli, Gail, Kobi & Alex;
brother to *Emilio* (†), *Paulina, Leoncia, Felisa,*
Amalia (†), *Veron, Aurelia* (†), *Jando*

His remains lie in state at the Nacional Memorial Homes,
G. Araneta Avenue, Quezon City.

Interment on 10 December 2006, 4:00 p.m. at
Loyola Memorial Park, Marikina City.

In lieu of flowers your donation to the Alec Alonzo Mendoza
One Life Foundation shall be appreciated.

An obituary
with apicture can
be a fitting tribute
to your departed
loved one.

Always caring...
INQUIRER OBITUARIES

OBITUARY REQUIREMENTS:

❶ Copy of Death Certificate
❷ Any identification document (I.D.)

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ABEL F. CASTAÑEDA

"Popsky"

"There is a land of the living and a land of the dead. And the bridge is love."

Peacefully passed away at the age of 77.

His wife **Emma** (†), and children **Alan** and **Alden**; daughter-in-law **Amy**; and family, request your prayers for his eternal happiness in heaven.
His remains lie in state at the Arlington Memorial Chapels, G. Araneta Avenue, Quezon City.
There will be a Resurrection Mass on December 09, 2006 at 8:00 a.m.
Interment follows at Loyola Memorial Park, Marikina.

"...absent from the body to be present with the Lord."

— 2 Corinthians 5:8

1987

Speaker Jose de Venecia, Jr.

and the

Members of the House of Representatives

mourn the passing away of a colleague

HON. ERNESTO S. GIDAYA

Party List Representative, Veterans Freedom Party

on Monday, December 4, 2006 at the age of 80.

His remains will be brought from St. Ignatius Cathedral Mortuary, Camp General Emilio Aguinaldo, Quezon City to the Plenary Hall, House of Representatives, Batasan Hills, Quezon City, for a Requiem Mass and Necrological Services at 10:00 a.m. today, December 7, 2006.

After the Requiem Mass and Necrological Services at the House of Representatives, his remains will be brought to the Multipurpose Hall in Camp Crame at 1:00 p.m. of the same day.

On Friday afternoon his remains will be transferred to the Hearts of Jesus and Mary Parish, West Triangle Homes, Quezon City, where he will stay until his cremation on December 12, 2006.

Interment will be attended by family members only.

We request the pious readers to pray for the eternal repose of his soul.

People, Events & Products

A hotel tailor-made to a growing value-and-quality-oriented segment

ITS PRIME LOCATION ALONG MAKATI Avenue truly makes it accessible to a growing number of medium-sized businesses, not to mention a wide array of diverse ethnic eat and drink options for after-business pursuits as well as interesting mix-use developments a few steps away that will reposition the area as another growth sub-center in the country's premier business city.

It takes pride in many of the amenities that its costlier counterparts can boast of: 134 spacious, well-appointed rooms and suites, wireless Internet access in all rooms, electronic safety deposit box, plus perks as standard features like express check-in five minutes upon arrival for VIPs and repeat guests, and a choice of full Western, Filipino, or Asian hot breakfast buffets, among many others.

Less on pretention

For those who are on conventions, it boasts of two well-equipped function rooms (Las Ventas and Las Monumental) on the 3rd and 4th floors, respectively) totaling 4,690 sq. ft. and feature a flexibility of arrangements for different meeting and banquet requirements. Within the lobby area is a business center for those last-minute e-transactions, and for those who wish to relax with a few laps, there is also an indoor swimming pool.

Yet it does not have the pretentiousness of its costlier competitors: what you enter into instead is a small, but cozy and well-laid-out lobby, where the cheerful staff is ready to get you into the perfect mood before attending to your business transactions along the area or moments before you decide to unwind in your room after a long, hectic day of combined corporate and leisure matters. This is what a stay at Best Western Astor Hotel Makati is all about.

Opened only two years ago, Best Western Astor Hotel Makati is affiliated to the renowned Best Western global chain as its brand. It is managed by Hong Kong-based Agon Hotels and Resorts Ltd and is owned by TF Ventures Inc one of the most reputable Filipino-owned real estate companies. The Phoenix, Arizona-based Best Western, for its part is among the world's largest hotel chains, with over 4,500 hotels in six continents, totaling more than 350,000 rooms.

Besting high standards

It is, in short, a formula of offering international standards at very competitive rates. In addition to guest-friendly attractions as inclusive features like Internet access in all rooms and a choice of hot breakfasts, high standards are also met, as the hotel has partnered with prestigious shipping companies that allow its staff to be trained at Best Western Astor Makati in the fine points of personalized hotel service. And though the hotel's El Prado Restaurant may be small by four-star standards, it instead puts emphasis on a wide array of menus to suit different tastes, concocted under a chef who had extensive experience in a renowned global cruise liner.

Putting to fruition with consistency such concepts have paid off excellently for the hotel; this enabled it to generate very impressive growth in gross operating profits with the highest mark hitting at 288 percent under its new management and win the Best Western International citation for perfect 1000 points score for Employee Service, an annual survey done by the international hotel chain-and even besting such standards that have won the acclaim of its growing clientele base.

Product FILES

Guilt-free snacking with the new all- year round Nova Summer Salad

JACK 'N JILL NOVA, THE HEALTHIER SNACK ALTERNATIVE, NOW offers another great tasting and healthful snack option with its latest flavor, Jack 'n Jill Nova Summer Salad. A snack made from four grains, namely, corn, wheat, rice and oats, new Jack 'n Jill Nova Summer Salad provides all the health benefits of a multigrain snack. Wellness-conscious munchers will definitely get a different snacking experience with its unique, tangy flavor that's sure to pique the taste buds So give in to your craving to nibble without the guilt with Jack 'n Jill Nova, the healthier snack. And make summer a year round affair with new Jack 'n Jill Nova Summer Salad, available in 40g buddy pack and 78g family pack sizes in leading supermarkets and food outlets nationwide.

Asian Eye Institute
and
Ramon Magsaysay Award Foundation

EYE EXPERTS HOLD ROUNDTABLE DISCUSSION AT AEI
Eye experts from Nepal and the Philippines held a roundtable discussion at the Asian Eye Institute on how to reduce the incidence of blindness in the Philippines caused by cataract. In photo are (front row, from left) Dr. Sanduk Ruit and Dr. Felipe Tolentino; standing from left are Dr. Rene Zamora, Dr. Jesse Caguioa, Dra. Annabelle Ching, Federico Borromeo, Mavis Campos, Dr. Roland Houle, Carla Lopez, Dr. Johnny Nanagas, George Murillo, Dr. Amadeo Veloso, Dr. Bobby Ang, Dr. Edgar Leuenberger, Dr. Harvey Uy, Dra. Pik Sha Uy, Dra. Joy Ang, Dra. Heidi Remulla, and Dra. Marimel Veloso.

BITS & Clips

AHS 71 Int'l X-mas Party

AHS CLASS '71 INTERNATIONAL (NONI GROUP) will have a Christmas Party on Dec. 16, 4 p.m. at the Basketball Court Topland Subd., Sucat Paranaque. For details, please call Susan Pasia -927-4245 loc. 4101; Weng Perote - 825-9593; Bessie Camacho-de Guzman - 632-6031; Beth Andres - 897-8808 loc. 502.

Pag-IBIG, Creba concert

THE PAG-IBIG FUND, THE PREMIERE FUNDER OF the government's housing program, which has been providing Filipinos with their dream houses for the past 26 years, partners with Creba in honoring Filipino talents in a concert dubbed, "Panalo Ka! A Tribute to Filipino Champions!" The concert's honorees are Jeremie Antiporda, the All Stars Hip Hop dancers, Sam Concepcion, and the Quezon City Performing Arts. Be at the AFP Theater on Dec. 14 and enjoy a celebration with the Champions, with guests Christian Bautista, Rica Peralejo, Nikki Gil, Joross Gamboa, Sugar Free, Tyrone Perez and Charie Pineda. For ticket reservations please call the Creba Secretariat at tel. nos. 373-2270 to 373-2272.

Clusivol Power C: the more affordable Vitamin C for kids

THERE IS NOW AN AFFORDABLE WAY OF PROtecting your children from disease - Clusivol Power C, the newest addition to the Clusivol healthcare line. Clusivol Power C is 100 percent Vitamin C especially made for children. It is the best way for children to get their daily requirement of Vitamin C and build strong resistance to disease and infection. It even comes in a child-friendly, yummy citrus flavor. Protection at a lesser price than the leading brand Clusivol Power C is priced at only P96 per 120ml bottle-- that's P20 more affordable than the leading brand. Now, frugal moms on a tight budget do not have a reason to scrimp on their child's health. Clusivol Power C also comes in convenient 60ml and 250 ml sizes priced P55 and P157 respectively.

Maybank opens in Caloocan

MAYBANK PHILIPPINES RECENTLY RELOCATED one of its branches to a new a better location in the heart of Caloocan City's central business district. Located at the Ground Floor of ZLT Building, at the corner of 10th Avenue and Rizal Avenue, Maybank Caloocan boasts of a more conducive environment for banking and enhanced service delivery. The big move is part of Maybank's thrust to identify and relocate key branches to strategic areas convenient to its clientele. It also emphasizes the pro-active role Maybank Philippines wants to undertake in the development of the area by becoming a premier banking service provider. For more information on Maybank Caloocan's banking products and services, you may contact (02)364-5526 or (02)364-5545 and look for branch head Christina Ong.

Asean drops plan to adopt single currency

Financial integration takes back seat in Cebu summit

By Daxim L. Lucas

CEBU CITY—THE ASSOCIATION of Southeast Asian Nations (Asean) has put on the backburner a plan to create a single regional currency by 2015 and has, instead, adopted a more achievable goal of "harmonizing and aligning" the financial systems of member countries within the period.

The move is a reality check for the 10-nation political and economic bloc which had launched the idea of a single regional currency six years ago as part of the so-called Chiang Mai Initiative.

"What we are working on now is the harmonization and alignment of our financial markets, capital markets, and practices," Finance Undersecretary Roberto B. Tan said in an interview.

For the Philippines, dropping the plan to create a single regional currency means the perpetuation of a cumbersome and inefficient trading scheme that would prevent consumers at the lowest levels from enjoying the full benefits of regional trade.

Officials, however, vowed to pursue other aspects of economic integration like trade and easing controls on migrant workers.

"Such inefficiencies will have an effect on local pricing, definitely," Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas Gov. Amando M. Tetangco Jr. said.

The shift in Asean's focus away from financial integration is evident in the published agenda of the 12th Asean Summit where talk on money matters—a hot topic in previous editions of this annual meeting—is conspicuously absent.

Of the 95-odd multilateral meetings scheduled this week and next, none was devoted for the region's various financial issues.

Finance Secretary Margarito B. Teves and other finance ministers will not be attending the meeting, while Tan, the finance department's point man for the summit, remains only "on standby" 320 kilometers away in Manila.

Tan said the main venue for discussing financial and monetary integration was the annual Asean Finance Ministers Meeting. He, however, conceded that the body's interest in the idea has diminished even at this level.

"We have the AFMM as a separate channel for that," he said "[But] integration still depends on the situation of individual Asean countries."

"We'll have to take a closer look at it, and it's still the subject of a lot of discussion," Tan added, noting that some Asean countries already have developed and open financial sectors while those of other members remain in their infancy.

During yesterday's media briefing at Cebu International Convention Center, Asean-Philippines director general Luis T. Cruz said the summit's attention shifted to socio-cultural issues since political and economic issues were already addressed in previous meetings.

"But it doesn't mean that there will be less focus on the other pillars of Asean," he added.

Cruz said that the decision to ease up on the gas pedal toward regional monetary and financial integration was due to the realization of leaders of the wide differences in development among member nations.

"Some countries in the Asean have an annual per capital income of only $400, while there are others whose per capita income levels are between $25,000 and $26,000 a year," he said. "The single currency has been discussed in the past, but there's still a development gap (among members) that needs to be addressed."

This year's incarnation of the annual summit will attempt to manage the social impact of planned economic integration initiatives, Cruz said.

"Before we think of monetary integration, we thought of addressing the fundamentals first," he added.

The shift in focus is also a concern for BSP's Tetangco who, along with other central bankers and finance ministers in the region, have been working to reduce the "friction costs" of trading between different Asean markets.

"Fifty percent of all trade in Asian countries is now directed at other Asian countries," he said. "There is scope for improving efficiency."

"The existing framework is an impediment," the BSP chief added.

The reality check came after leaders took a hard look at the European model which has successfully created a single market and a single currency—a goal that Asean member was achieved by as soon as 2015.

"Even Europe took over 50 years to achieve this, despite already having very advanced economies," the finance department's Tan said. "The focus has been changed after they realized that it will take more than 20 years to achieve."

Gov't to bid out Magat power plant on Dec. 14

POWER SECTOR ASSETS AND LIabilities Management Corp. has set the bidding for the 360-megawatt (MW) Magat hydropower plant in Isabela for Dec. 14, following the issuance of the final bid documents last week.

The bid documents included the final version of the asset purchase agreement and land lease agreement.

Other bid documents such as the lease contract and the operation and maintenance agreement with the National Irrigation Administration would also be released as soon as negotiations are completed.

Under the asset purchase agreement, the winning bidder will have to remit a 40-percent downpayment on or before the closing date.

The balance is payable in 14 equal semi-annual payments with a compounded interest of 12 percent.

The winning bidder will also be required to post a performance bond equivalent to 2 percent of the purchase price and post a deferred payment security deposit equivalent to at least the next deferred payment in the form of cash, currently dated manager's check or an irrevocable standby letter of credit acceptable to PSALM.

The performance bond will be reduced yearly to 2 percent of the aggregate amount of the deferred payments.

PSALM vice president for asset management Froilan Tampinco said that during the payment period, the asset would be turned over to the winning bidder, "on the condition that it will operate, maintain and rehabilitate the complex."

The winning bidder will have to sign the asset purchase agreement and land lease agreement with PSALM, as well as the lease contract and operation and maintenance agreement with the NIA.

Abigail L. Ho

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OFWs tapped for development of new industries

By Abigail L. Ho

THE EUROPEAN CHAMBER OF COMMERCE of the Philippines will ask overseas Filipino professionals to help accelerate the development of new service industries in the Philippines.

In a statement, the group said the project, dubbed "Global Filipino Professionals," aimed to initially create a network of OFWs who could provide their market knowledge and expertise to spur the development of new industries, particularly in the service sector

According to ECCP executive vice president Henry Schumacher, Filipinos working abroad were "the most ideal group of individuals who can communicate the new Philippines to the international community."

"It is time to tap the ideas and expertise of overseas Filipino professionals. The project is not just about bringing them home. We want them to provide leads to the Philippines and give information on how the new sectors should be developed. We want them to also tell us the opportunities and partnerships available," he said.

Some of the most promising industries that overseas Filipino professionals could help develop include health, retirement, information technology, multimedia, design, research and development, and engineering, the ECCP said.

To jumpstart the project, Schumacher said the ECCP would initially have a dedicated website that would provide up-to-date information on developments in the new industries and gather feedback from overseas Filipinos.

This site would also serve as an "exchange forum" among those interested in helping the country develop these promising service industries.

THE GOAL is to create a network of OFWs who could provide their market knowledge and expertise to support new service industries, says ECCP.

"We are convinced that a substantial number of Filipino IT experts, financial analysts, healthcare professionals, managers, entrepreneurs, and designers can be found around the world. These are the people we believe can help the country in the long term," Schumacher said.

"If we are really successful with this undertaking, we may see them invest in these new industries and eventually come back to be part of this exciting development," he added.

For the program to reach its target market, he said the ECCP would coordinate with Philippine embassies worldwide as well as with Filipino membership organizations abroad.

The business intelligence and marketing that these overseas Filipino professionals could provide, he said, could mean more remittances flowing to the Philippines.

According to International Monetary Fund estimates, total remittances from the estimated eight million Filipinos overseas should reach $14.8 billion by year's end.

Exxon Mobil to drill for oil in southern RP

EXXON MOBIL CORP, THE world's largest oil firm, yesterday said it would explore for oil in an offshore prospect off southern Philippines.

An Exxon Mobil unit, Esso Exploration International Ltd., entered into an agreement with Mitra Energy Ltd., holder of the exploration contract for the deepwater Sandakan Basin to explore for hydrocarbons, the US parent said in a statement on its website.

Exxon Mobil acquired a 50-percent operating interest in the Sandakan Basin service contract, covering some two million acres (810,000 hectares), with Mitra remaining as the operator during the exploration phase of the project, it added.

The deal is subject to Philippine regulatory approval.

"We are pleased to add this prospective acreage to our global portfolio and to have this opportunity to enter the oil and gas industry in the Philippines," said Steve Greenlee, vice president of Esso Exploration International.

"We look forward to working with Mitra as we explore for potential commercial resources in the block."

Exxon Mobil's major exploration and production operations in the Asia-Pacific are concentrated in Australia, Indonesia, Malaysia and Papua New Guinea.

AFP

Republic of the Philippines
ZAMBOANGA CITY WATER DISTRICT
Pilar Street, Zamboanga City

SECTION I. INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

The Zamboanga City Water District, through its Bids and Awards Committee II (BAC II), invites Security Agencies to apply for eligibility and to bid for the hereunder project:

PR. NO.	BRIEF DESCRIPTION	APPROVED BUDGET FOR THE CONTRACT (ABC)	COST OF BID DOCUMENTS	DATE OF ISSUANCE OF BID DOCUMENTS	DATE OF PRE-BID CONFERENCE	DATE OF SUBMISSION/ OPENING OF BIDS
9237	Dental Services (Retainer Dentist Contract for a period of One (1) year	P 180,000.00	P 250.00	December 4 to 8 2006	December 8, 2006	December 20, 2006

Bidding will be conducted through open competitive bidding procedures using non-discretionary pass/fail criteria as specified in the Implementing Rules and Regulations Part A (IRR-A) of Republic Act 9184 (R.A. 9184), otherwise known as the Government Procurement Reform Act, and is restricted to organizations with at least sixty percent (60%) interest or outstanding capital stock belonging to citizens of the Philippines, as specified in Republic Act 5183 (R.A. 5183). Only Bids from Bidders who pass the eligibility check will be opened The process of the Eligibility check is described in Section II of the Bidding Documents, ITB. The bidder with lowest calculated bid (LCB) shall be advance to the post-qualification stage in order to finally determine its responsiveness to the technical and financial requirements of the project. The contract shall be then awarded to the Lowest Calculated and Responsive Bidder (LCRB) who was determined as such during the post qualification procedure.

Interested Bidders may obtain further information from the ZAMBOANGA CITY WATER DISTRICT and inspect the Bidding documents at the address given below during office hours (8.00-5:00 p.m.)

All Bids must be accompanied by a ***Bid Security in the form of Cash, Certified Check, Cashier's and Manager's Check in the amount of One Percent (1%) of the Approved Budget Cost.*** Late Bids shall not be accepted.

Bid Opening shall be at the 2nd Floor, ZAMBOANGA CITY WATER DISTRICT Main Office Building, Pilar St., Zamboanga City. Bids will be opened in the presence of the Bidder's representative's who choose to attend at the address below.

The ZAMBOANGA CITY WATER DISTRICT reserves the right to accept or reject any Bid, and to annul the bidding process and reject all Bids at any time or prior to contract award, without thereby incurring any liability to the affected Bidder or Bidders.

ZAMBOANGA CITY WATER DISTRICT
Mr. Noel M. Kawaguchi
Pilar St., Zamboanga City 7000
Telephone No. (062) 991-1556
Fax: (062) 991-2799

(Sgd.) LEONARDO REY D. VASQUEZ
BAC II-Chairman

(PDI – December 7, 2006)

Banks face risk management woes

By Doris C. Dumlao

PHILIPPINE BANKS, LIKE THEIR peers in most emerging markets, are facing huge risk management challenges and the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas is disappointed that some local lenders remain too complacent.

In a keynote speech at an Asian Institute of Management risk management forum yesterday, BSP Governor Amando Tetangco Jr. said that despite the challenges, some banks still would not initiate risk management capacity-building if it were not required by the central bank.

Asked how far Philippine banks were from reaching the ideal risk management capability, BSP Deputy Governor Nestor Espenilla Jr. said some banks were in the advanced level, while some were lagging behind. "Some are still looking at this as a compliance issue—hoping this will go away," he said.

During the forum, Tetangco said the banking system's off-balance exposure todate amounted to P2.29 trillion, as against total assets of P4.3 trillion. This, he said, made it imperative for the banks improve their risk management capabilities.

TETANGCO

Off-balance sheet items refer to activities related to financing or raising of money that does not appear on the balance sheet, such as derivatives, trust and trade-related contingent accounts.

The banking system's derivatives exposure amounts to about P1.27 trillion, while its assets and trade-related contingent accounts are estimated at P887.8 billion and P136.1 million, respetively.

Tetangco said the challenges were not unique to Philippine banks, citing studies by the Basle-based Bank for International Settlements about common concerns in emerging markets.

For instance, he said most banks in the developing world were still having problems in collecting data and adopting modern techniques to estimate default probabilities of borrowers. He said even foreign banks operating in emerging markets could not rely on data from their main offices to accurately assess investments in these specific markets.

Tetangco said banks were also facing the challenge of financing the large investment requirements of developing sophisticated risk management systems. He said banks that could meet this challenge would also benefit by preventing potential catastrophic events that could cost more.

He said the financial markets would play a big role in rewarding banks with sound risk management systems and punishing those with poor systems.

LIFESTYLE
Editor Chelo Banal-Formoso
edback: inquirer life name/age/city/message to 2207 (Globe) and 386 (Smart) or email us at lifestyle@inquirer.com.ph

Mönmilk
Pure, Natural and Tasty
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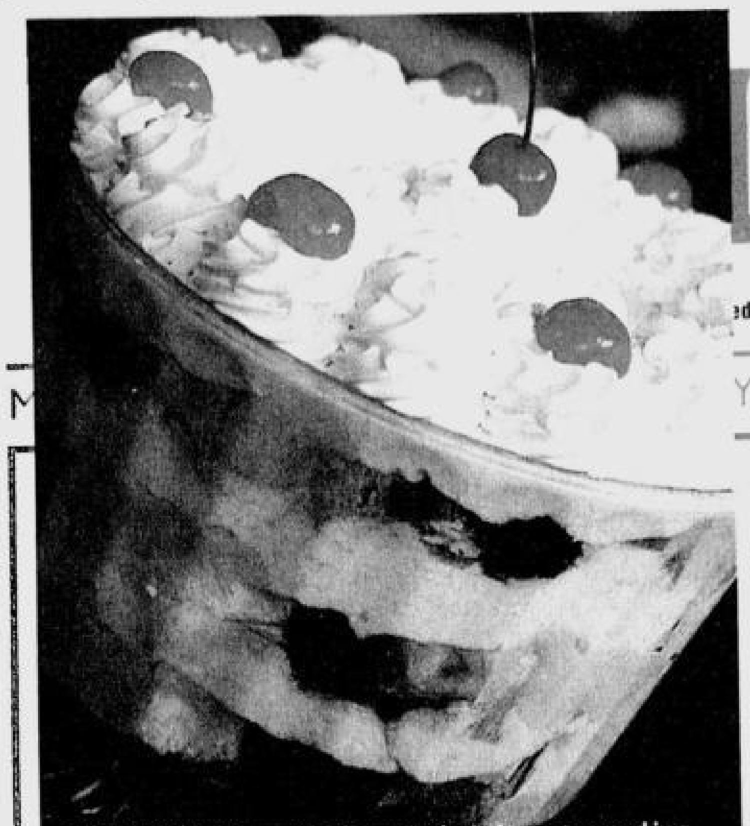


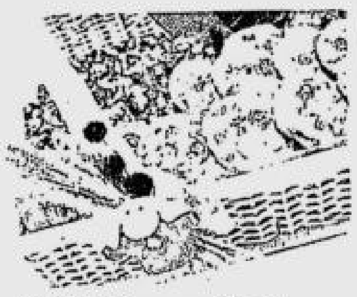
MEXICAN Truffle, an ideal centerpiece dessert served in a stemmed trifle bowl with layers of angel cake, sherry-laced custard, strawberry jam and whipped cream, P1,450

Definitely dessert-ified

ROSHAN SAMTANI, 35, offers several baked goodies available all year round. Though she has no formal training, her love for baking has resulted in a growing number of loyal customers. She experiments regularly and keeps adding to her list of treats.

Homemade by Roshan's sweets list includes Oreo Mud Cake, chocolate cake with Oreo filling and frosting; Prince Albert Cake, a rich combination of chocolate cake, honey crunch and coffee whipped cream; and Jamocha Fudge Walnut Torte, chocolate ganache in between three layers of walnut meringue covered with espresso cream.

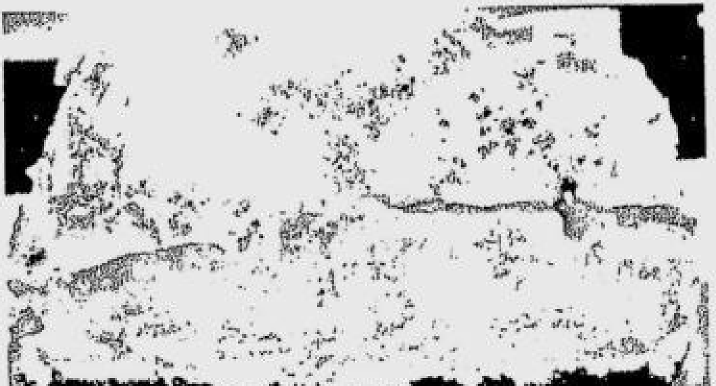
Call 7248960; mobile 0917-8336286.



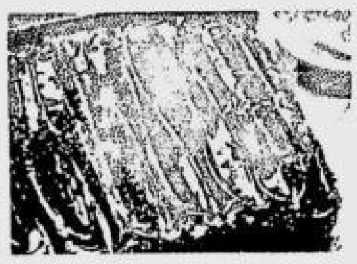
ANGEL'S Treasure Chest, hamper filled with Food for the Gods, Fudge Walnut Brownies and a dozen of your choice of cookies (Ghirardelli Chocolate Chip cookies, Belgian Chocolate Chunk cookies, Nutella Chocolate Chip cookies and Chewy Oatmeal Raisin Walnut cookies) for P1,775

DECADENT Chocolate Fudge Mini Cakes with super rich, perfectly piped fudge icing and studded with sugar dots for that colorful festive touch, P800/24 pcs

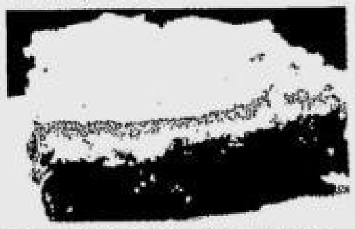
Frozen delights



A COOL concoction of ice cream, chewy "yema," graham crackers and meringue for an utterly delicious Frozen Brazo de Mercedes. Size: 9"x9," P500



CHOCOLATE Cake with Caramel Sauce, a dessert good enough for the festive holiday spread. Sizes: 9"x9," P350; 13" x 9," P550



BANANA and caramel lovers go gaga over this Frozen Choco Banana. Size: 9"x9," P550

SHY AND UNASSUMING Dimpy Camara has been dishing out baked goodies since she was six. Not formally trained, she learned to bake and cook from generations of good cooks in the family.

Her passion for baking resulted in an impressive list of frozen goodies and mouthwatering cakes that, by word of mouth, have become popular.

Her super soft, moist butter-cake (9"x9", P275; 9"x13", P550) is a bestseller. Her regular clients include the Madrigals, Cojuangcos, Binays, Concepcions, Arroyos, Lagdameos, Tantocos.

Her dream is to produce enough to supply stores in the metropolis so that more people will get to enjoy her sweets.

Call 8178099, 8438086 (Makati, look for Sol); 8509655 (Alabang, look for Benz).

Gifts of flavor to savor

Text by Vangie Baga-Reyes
Photos by Jim Guiao-Punzalan

'TIS THE SEASON TO BE generous once again. And food is usually one of the most welcome gifts at Christmas.

While some gifts may be fun or boring, like a bar of orange-colored soap or a decorative candle, there is no present as perfect as a decadent chocolate cake drizzled in caramel syrup to bring a holiday meal to a memorable close.

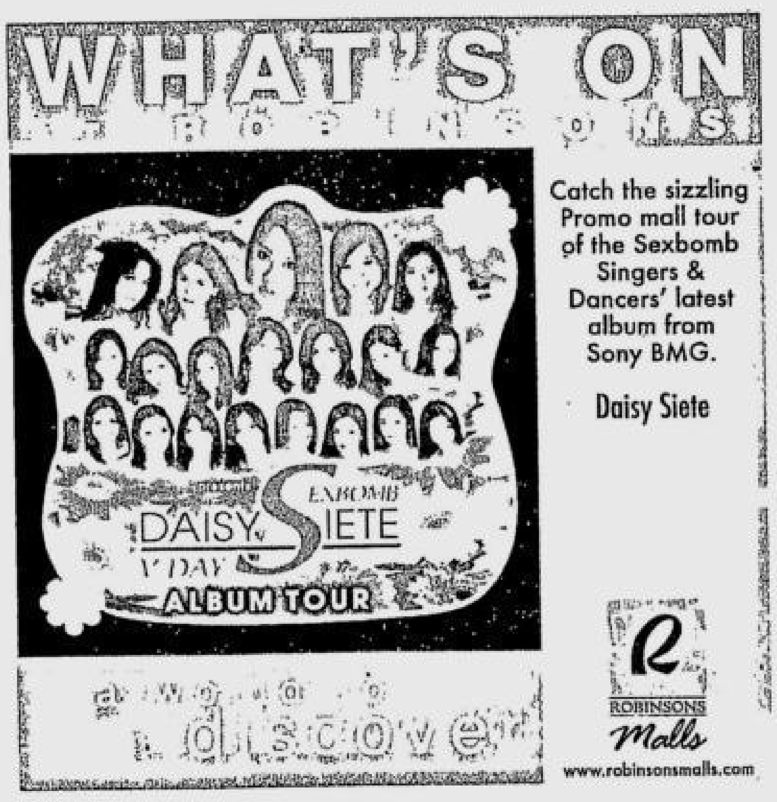
There are home-based bakers and skilled cooks who make exceptional goodies just for the gift-giving season. They trim and garnish their holiday treats to make them truly special holiday presents.

Here are some suggestions that will undoubtedly bring good cheer to any recipient.

Be sure to include some or all of them on your list and don't forget to get some for yourself, too!

E-mail the author at vbaga@inquirer.com.ph.

GIFTS/ C2


WHAT'S ON ROBINSONS
Catch the sizzling Promo mall tour of the Sexbomb Singers & Dancers' latest album from Sony BMG.
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SEXBOMB DAISY SIETE V DAY ALBUM TOUR
discover
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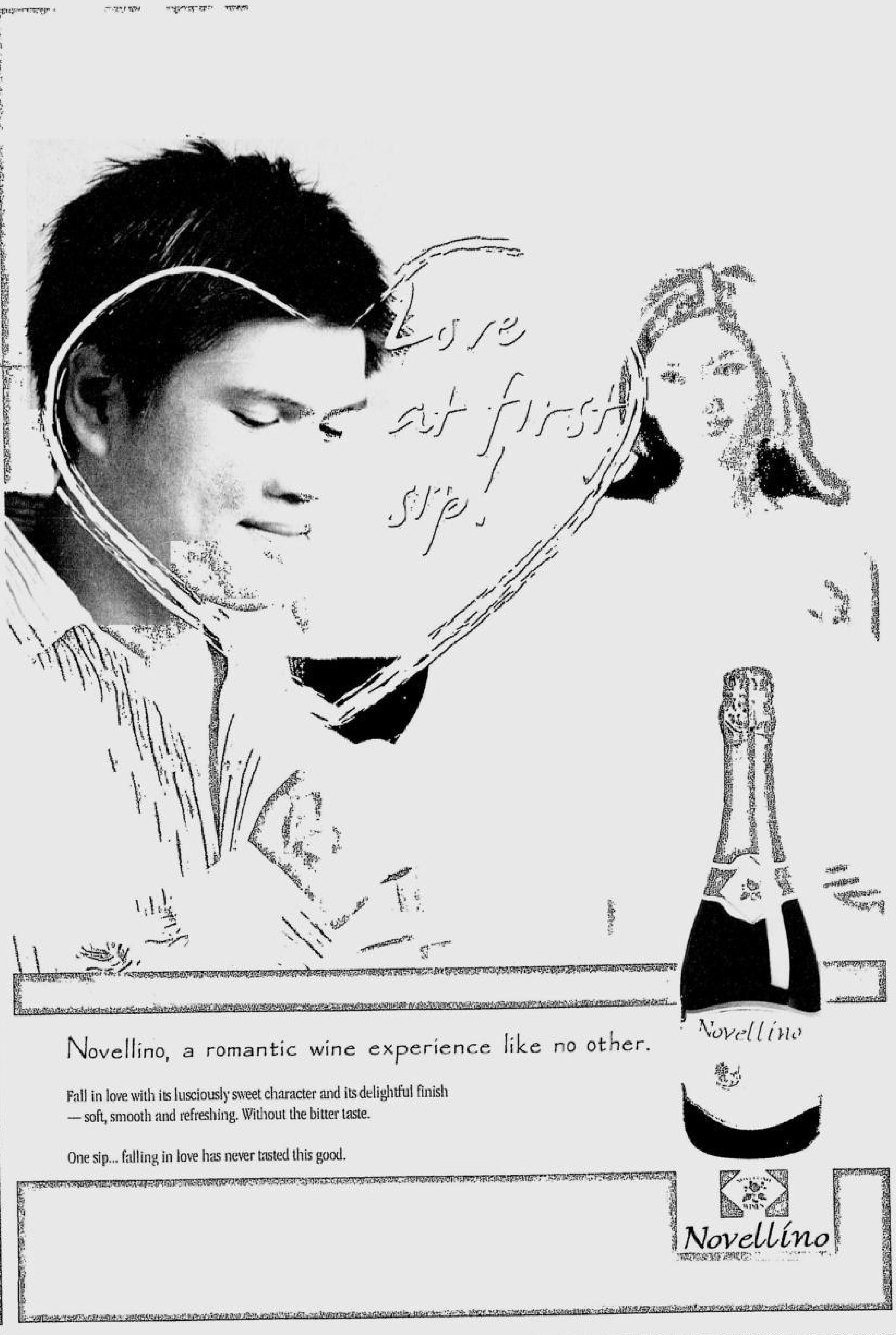
www.robinsonsmalls.com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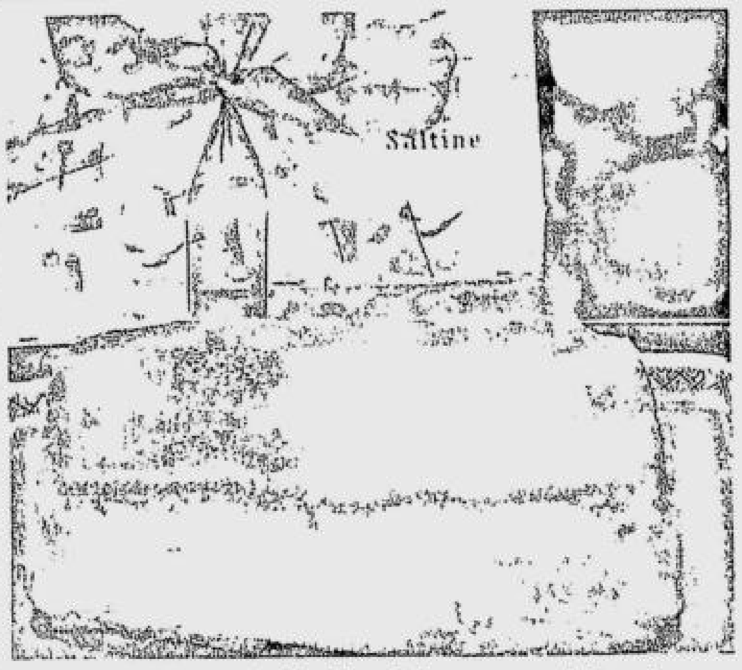


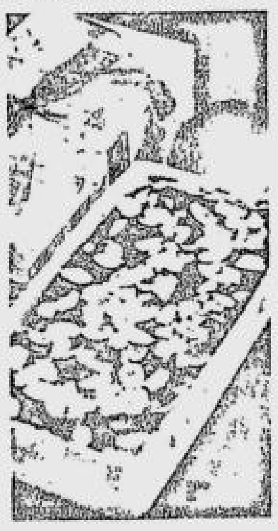
CAP your holiday meal with this melt-in-your-mouth Bread Pudding, not so sweet but decadently rich with golden syrup. P500/order

Patties, pastries and pastas

SALTINE is a home-based business run by 25-year-old Tippi Tambunting, who used to be New York-based chef until she decided to return home and delight her family and friends with her cooking. She also does catering, offering her Duck Confit, Braised Wagyu Shanks and mini tart flambés.

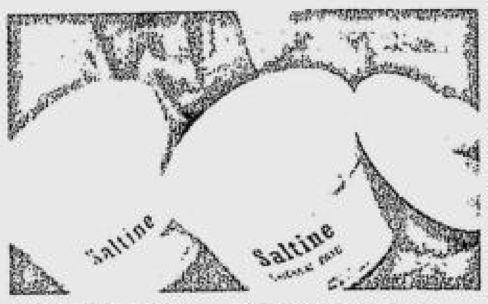
Tambunting fuses continental cuisine and home-cooked dishes. Her regular items are patties with different fillings, like big *empanadas*; lemon squares, toffee cookies, pasta sauces and salad dressings.

Call 8438970/71; 0918-8118088; 0919-8958603.



PATTIES with chicken, spinach or tuna filling (P35); and short ribs, pork *adobo*, *chorizo* and mushroom (P40). Minimum of six pieces per order.

ENGANYO is a sponge cake with custard filling topped with chocolate syrup and shaved almonds. P600/order

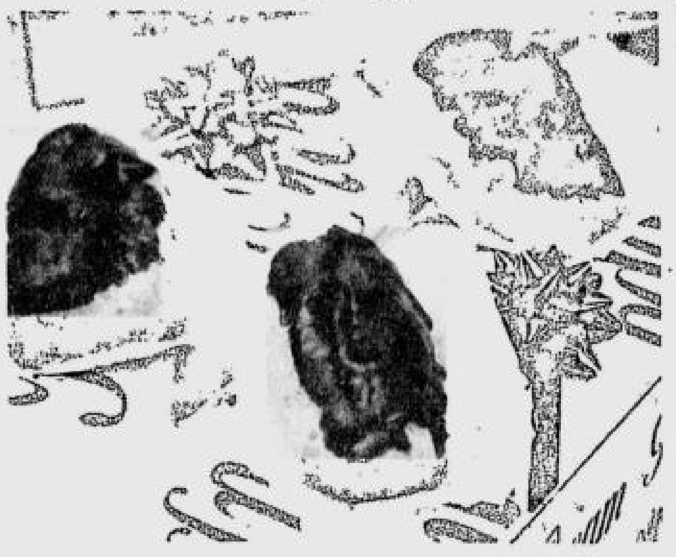


CHICKEN Pâté is perfect with crackers and crostinis. P240/order.

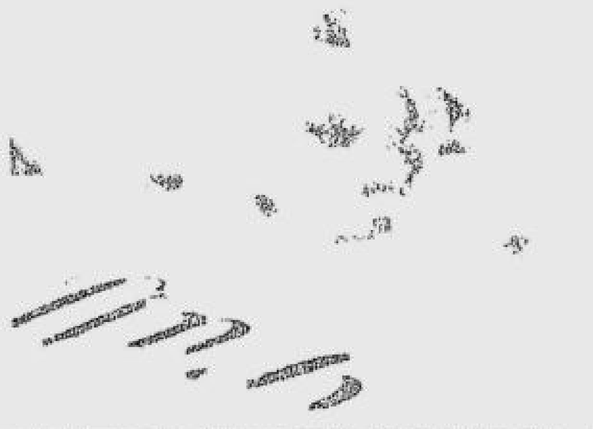
Cream of the puff

MARICEL YAMAGISHI, married to a Japanese businessman, learned to bake cream puff in Japan. She bought an industrial oven and put up a kiosk at the ground level, south area, of Metropolis Star in Alabang. Her cream puff has fresh milk, fresh eggs, butter, flour, fresh whipped cream, vanilla beans, chocolate, sugar and mineral water. The custard cream is made of egg yolk and fresh milk, no food additives.

Call 0921-8187626, 0928-7389947.



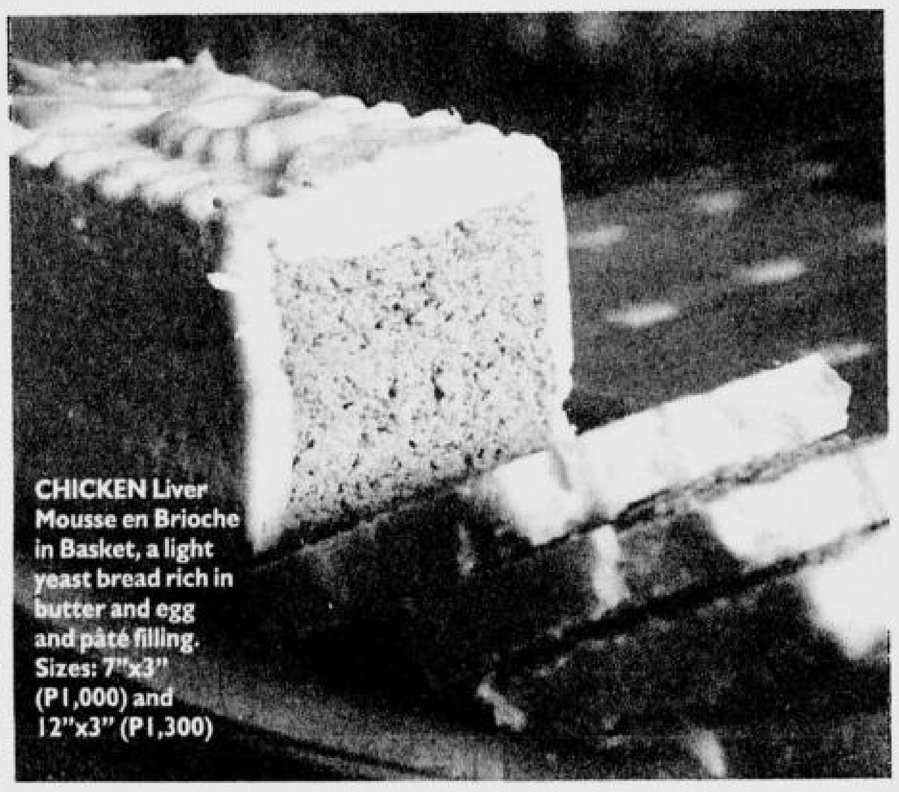
ÉCLAIR, P25/each and available in boxes of three or five.



HAPPY Cream Puff, calorie-rich treat that will overcome all resistance. P20/each

Gifts of flavor to savor

From page C1



CHICKEN Liver Mousse en Brioche in Basket, a light yeast bread rich in butter and egg and pâté filling. Sizes: 7"x3" (P1,000) and 12"x3" (P1,300)

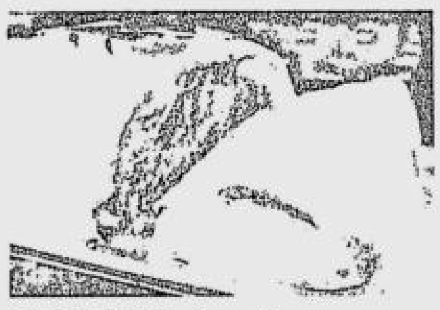
French favorites

MICHELE D'ORIVAL LIVED IN France for 25 years. Upon returning to the Philippines with husband Jean d'Orival, a banker and vice president of Le Club French Chamber of Commérce in the Philippines, she joined the Salcedo Weekend Market, offering French specialties like Poulet Roti Provençal (roast chicken with garlic and aioli), Canard a l'Orange (duck orange), Taboule (parsley salad with semoule) and Tarte Tatin (caramelized apple tart).

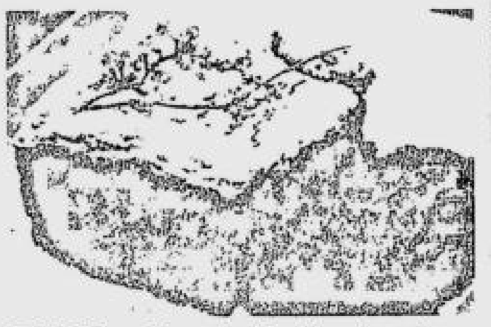
She also has a catering business called La Cuisine Francaise.

For Christmas, she makes Quiche Lorraine, tart with gruyere and smoked bacon (P800); Christmas Turkey, 4 kg (P3,500); and Jamon en Croute, Christmas ham in crust with Madeira sauce (P1,700).

Call 8937347; 0918-9246405.



CHICKEN Galantine with Chaudfroid Sauce is glazed with Aspic, which is allowed to set before serving. The meat is first cooked then chilled before serving. P1,500

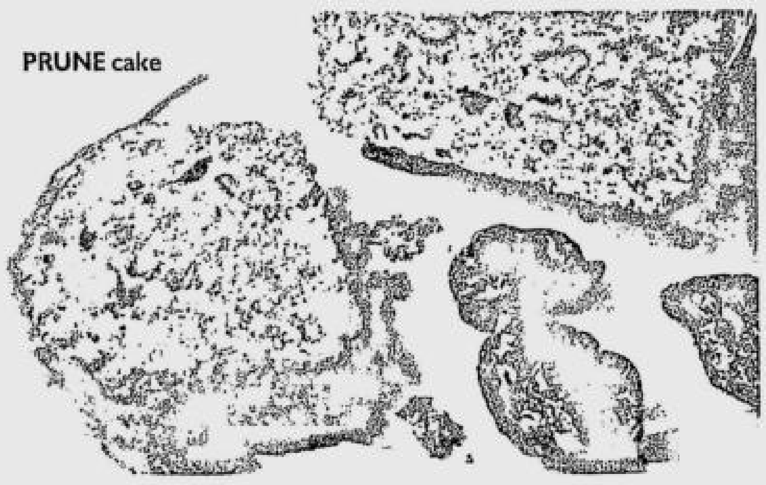


GATEAU au Chocolat (Parisian chocolate cake) is made of eggs, raisins, rum, almonds and Callebaut chocolate. It has no flour, that's why it's kind of dense and heavy in the tummy. P450/order

PEAR and Almond Tart, extra sweet but worth every calorie, P800/order

Award-winning fruitcakes

PRUNE cake



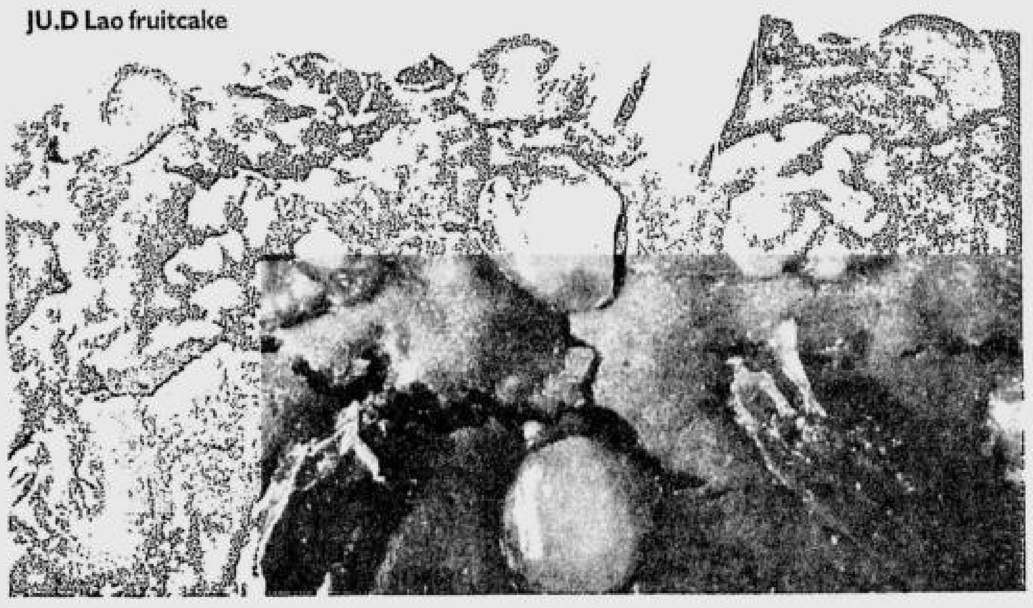
THIS CHRISTMAS, WHY NOT GIVE JU.D Lao fruitcakes to friends and family?

Given the award for Best Fruitcake Manufacturer by the Philippine Marketing Awards Institute (PMAI), the Ju.D Product Philippines assures clients of consistency in quality of the baked items.

The meticulous care the company gives to its products has also earned it a special recognition last year from PMAI. Its new Ginger Cranberry Fruitcake was named Most Outstanding Fruitcake in the national category for the Product Quality Excellence Award.

Call 6330260 or 6331188 or visit 50 Greenmeadows Ave. (near Christ the King Church of Greenmeadows), Quezon City.

JU.D Lao fruitcake



Hassle-free partying

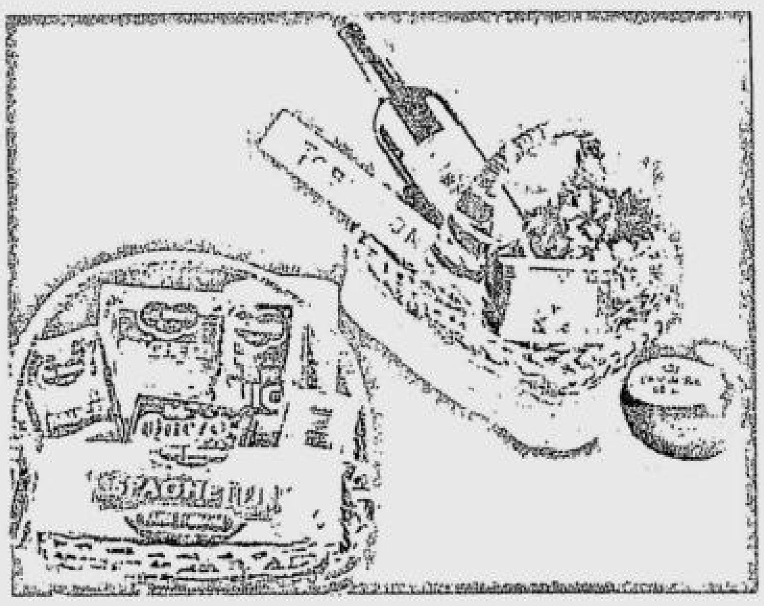
GOLDILOCKS' PARTY FUN FEAST PACKAGES can help make hosting social events hassle-free.

Packages include assorted noodles like Pancit Palabok, Pancit Malabon, Sotanghon Guisado and Spaghetti; pork dishes like Dinuguan, Barbecue, Lumpiang Shanghai, and Siomai; beef bestsellers like Caldereta and Kare-Kare, as well as chicken, seafood and vegetables.

An assortment of party-sized cakes is also available.

Visit your nearest Goldilocks Foodshop for the Christmas Party Fun Feast brochure. Packages offer incentives, discounts and free giveaways.

Christmas baskets



IT IS NEVER TOO early to start shopping for Christmas. Robinsons Supermarket presents a wide assortment of gift baskets for your corporate clients and business associates.

The baskets are available in festively wrapped packages and different price ranges, and contain an array of sweets, wine, chocolate, chips, ham and other Noche Buena goodies.

For a personal touch, you can also customize your own gift basket by choosing from among the wide array of food items from the grocery section with the help of the supermarket staff. Fresh food items like fruits in season and staple holiday fare like fruitcakes and food for the gods are likewise available in attractive Christmas packages.

Robinsons Supermarket's Christmas baskets can be delivered straight to your doorstep. Just fill out an order form and submit it to the customer service counter of any Robinsons Supermarket branch. Upon confirmation, your gift baskets will be delivered within three to four working days.

Call 6350751 local 365 or 3950110. Visit www.robinsons-supermarket.com.ph.

SPECIAL HOLIDAY HAM

FOR THOSE who feel it just isn't Christmas without a ham, CDO-Foodsphere Inc. offers a special ham for gift-giving or feasting this holiday. The CDO Holiday Whole-Meat Ham, this season's flagship product of the 30-year-old meat manufacturing company, is made from whole pork leg muscle and is boneless—a must-have whether you are shopping for gifts or for your Noche Buena spread.

COUNTRY COOKING

Micky Fenix

Gifts of Christmas past

THE FORMAL generation in their Christmas best

THE LESS formal generation pose on Christmas eve.

> Among past gifts my siblings and I never forgot was a gift basket for my father. Through the cellophane cover we could see Spanish goodies we haven't tasted before

ANTICIPATION. THAT'S the spirit of Christmas.

Looking back into my Christmases past, the spirit was first felt when the first of four Advent candles was lighted in school and we sang "O Come Emmanuel."

It would build up when the entire class approached the box of Kris Kringle gifts daily. Each of us got a gift from a classmate who would remain a mystery until the last day of classes in December.

At home, the spirit was heightened two days before Noche Buena. Knocks on the door were anxiously awaited. When they came, my siblings and I always knew that behind the door were my mother's friends and associates bearing gifts.

Her best friend, Tita Amelia, sent the American ham in a big can. Mama would glaze this with pineapple and brown sugar. And everyone's share would be a thick piece, the only time we could eat ham steak as we called it.

There would always be the memorable mocha roll in its aluminum foil, unpacked at the last moment and smelling divinely of butter.

Mama's suppliers also always came through. Mang del Mundo, who made her doors and windows to specification in his Taytay sash factory, brought *suman sa ibos* accompanied by mangoes and *matamis na bao*. Undoubtedly, the rice cake, fruit and coco jam came from Taytay's neighboring Antipolo hills.

And Mr. Villa, mama's cement and hollow block supplier, gave roast chicken yearly. Sometimes it would come just in time to fill the void on the Christmas eve table.

Multitasking mom

You may have gathered from the paragraphs above that she was an architect. Yet she had the time to make our clothes for Christmas day, which we spent at my grandparents' home. No one can match the multitasking abilities of my mother during the holidays.

Lola's table was always filled with dishes she cooked herself. But it would be incomplete without Mang Gusting's *ube halaya*. For years, her trusted man at the family hardware store always gifted her with the purple yam jam in a *kaldero*. This was later transferred into *llaneras* (oval tin containers) so everyone had a share.

The *ube* was always wiped with Star margarine on top and I always wondered why because the *halaya* didn't seem to need that salty, oily flavor. But I gave it a reason in my own mind—the yellow margarine was a complementary color to the violet of the *ube*.

My art teacher should be glad to know that I still retain lessons she taught while completely forgetting other more important everyday things.

Among past gifts my siblings and I never forgot was a gift basket for my father. Through the cellophane cover we could see Spanish goodies we had tasted before. We counted the days when the wrapper would be torn off and the contents opened. We were amazed at how rock-hard the almond *turrones* was. We needed the cleaver just to cut pieces off the block.

We were turned off by the sour taste of the champagne. I know now that the quality must have suffered in transit, from Spain to here to *bodega* to store and to the storage room in our warm kitchen.

Rare treasures

The sugar-coated almonds became a favorite, each piece savored because there were so few of the treasures for the many siblings to share. I saw some in a Macau grocery recently and hurriedly bought packs to savor once more the sweet memory of that basket. Of course, that will have to wait for Christmas eve.

Anticipation always involves waiting. And my longest wait was for a beautifully decorated round tin box to reveal its secret. The box held something wonderful because the aroma that escaped from it when the cover was lifted slightly overwhelmed the closet where it was hidden.

My mama explained that it was a fruitcake a friend from somewhere in the United States gave her.

The wonderful smell was brandy. And, more importantly, it was only to be opened on Christmas day. Understand how incomprehensible it was to my 9-year-old brain to wait for three months.

Whenever I had the chance, I would peek into the closet and see if that tin box was still there. Could anything last that long without being in the fridge? I asked myself. Could I wait that long?

My nose was nearest the fruitcake when the tin foil was opened. It was dizzying, the smell of brandy. The dark color was actually inviting.

When it was finally cut and each one of us was given a small piece, we all looked ecstatic as we tasted the moist texture of the cake for the first time, bit into the still crunchy nuts and the colorful glazed fruits. The experience and, I suppose, the brandy made us feel giddy.

Until now, my siblings and I welcome fruitcake as gift. We also welcome fruitcakes from other people who don't appreciate this rich heady wonderful calorie-rich cake.

I still have fruitcakes from last Christmas in my freezer. When I remember, one cake is revived, transferred from sub-zero to a more congenial temperature in the ref. The piece is bathed in brandy for a whole week. When I smell that it is ready, it will be offered as dessert or *merienda*. And it will be Christmas all year round.

E-mail the author at pinoyfood04@yahoo.com

Traditional sweets

LEARN TRADITIONAL SWEET HOLIDAY treats this Christmas from **Maya Kitchen Pastillas, Atbp. class** Dec. 9, 2-5 p.m.

Brownies and Pies Galore will be offered 9 a.m.-1 p.m., Dec. 9. Included are brownie cheesecake, date nuts, rocky road, French apple pie, lemon meringue and walnut pie. Baking for Business will be conducted Dec. 9, 3-5 p.m. The class covers use of Maya Mixes and the baking of black forest, carrot cake, crinkle kisses, rhum cake and *bibingka*, among others.

Visit the Maya Kitchen (Tuesday-Saturday) at 8/F, Liberty Building, A. Arnaiz Ave. (formerly Pasay Road), Makati City. Call 8921185 or 8925011 loc 108 or e-mail mkitchen@ultimate.info.com.ph.

Holiday recipes

The Reggie Aspiras School of Culinary Arts offers the following classes: Dec. 8—Ways with Wagyu (all new)—Brine Your Own Wagyu Corned Beef with condiments and sauces; Dec. 11—Christmas Morning 2006—Stylized Oatmeal with Condiments, Hearty American Diner-style Breakfast; Dec. 13—Noche Buena—Churros 2 Versions: Classic and Chocolate; Dec. 15—Media Noche—Fresh handmade Noodle Soup with Condiments and Choice of Stock (Beef or Chicken), Ensaymada Rolls and Holiday Cakes with Tablea Chocolate Fondue and Home-baked Fresh Baked Ham. Call 9289296/9273008/7221691.

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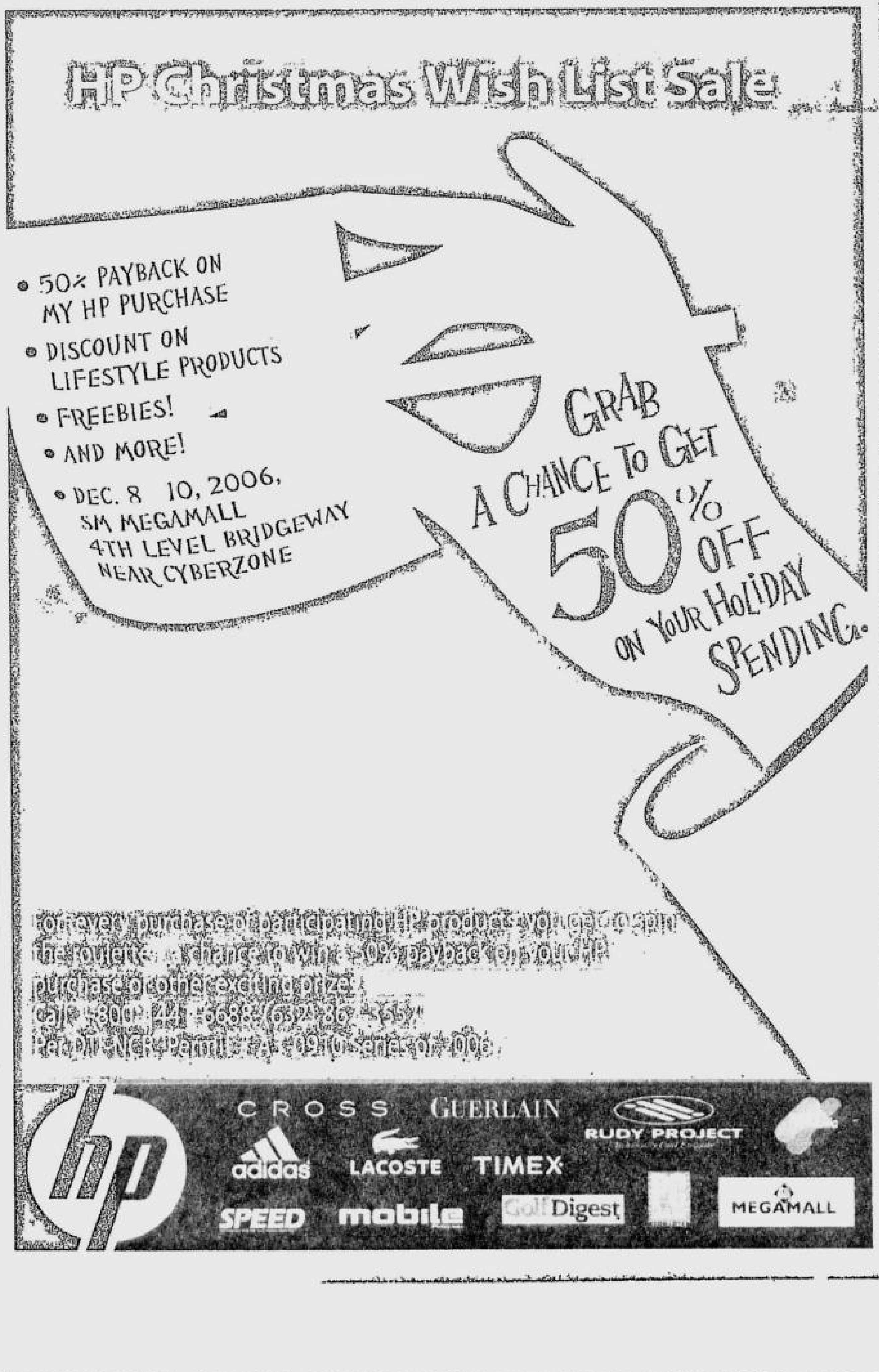
Heaven's Cure offers *bagoong* in virgin coconut oil (VCO) and organic spices. VCO is also used in its other products, such as Kalamay-hati, Crystal Oil, Lip Balm, Coco Rub, Massage Gel, I Repel, Zunshade SPF 30, and Not Just for Baby Oil. Visit Heaven's Cure at Stall 57, Tiendesitas, Fontera Verde, Pasig City; SM Megamall (Dec. 7-10 and 15-17), and World Trade Center, Roxas Blvd., Dec. 20-22. It has semi-permanent exhibits at SM Centerpoint and SM Bacoor, Cavite. Call 7443184 or visit www.marinduqueland.com and www.heavenscure.net.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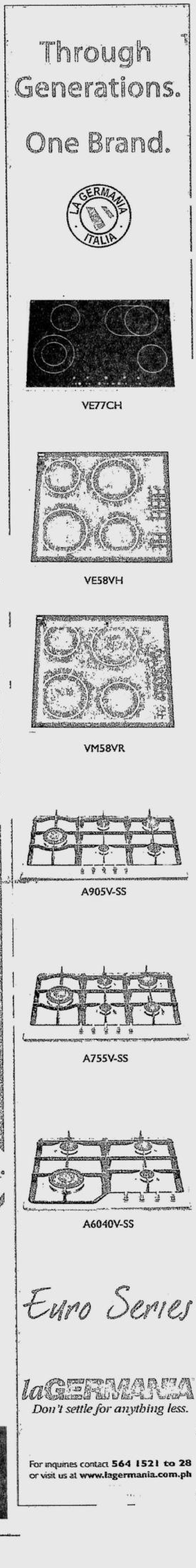
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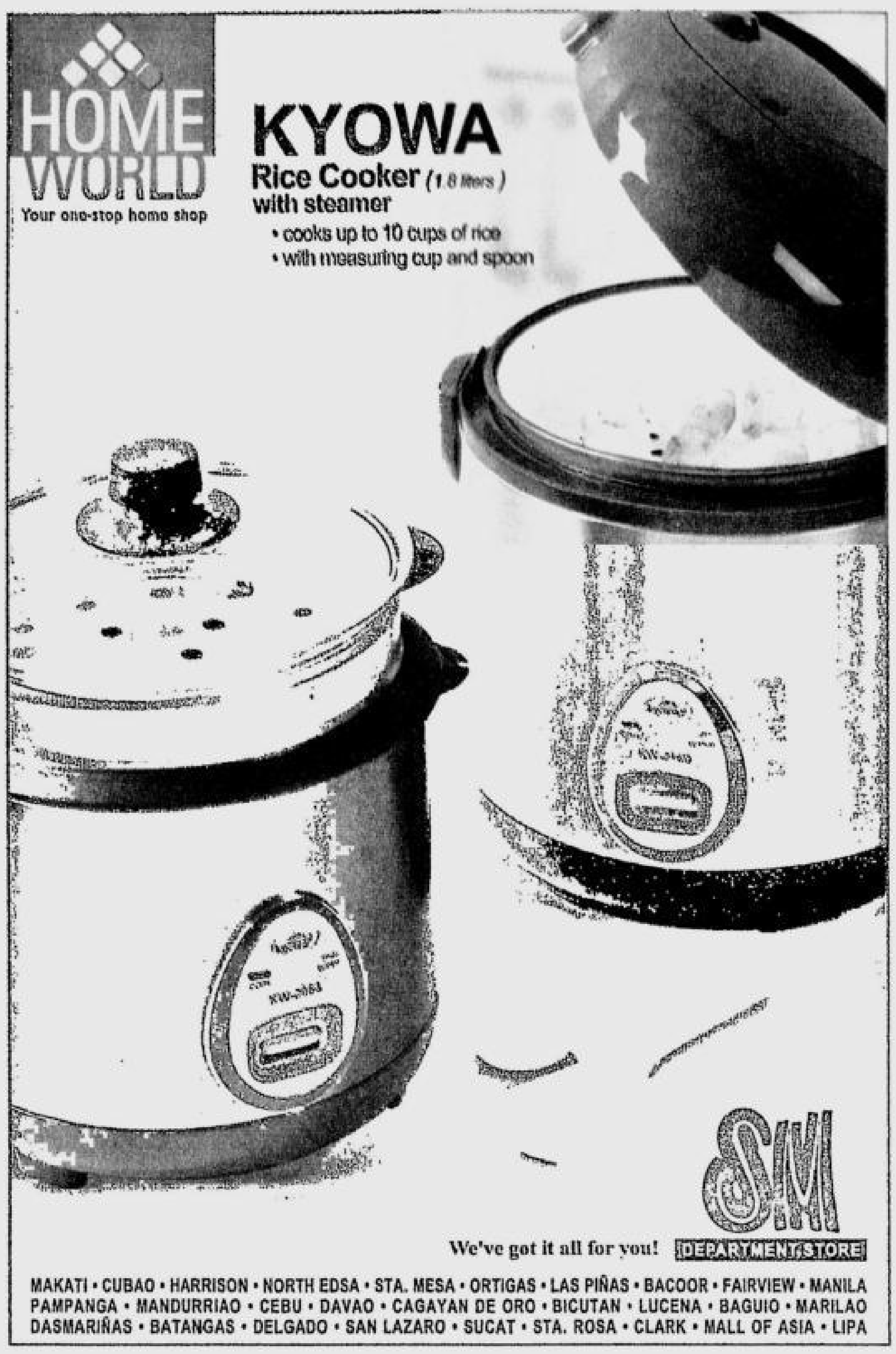
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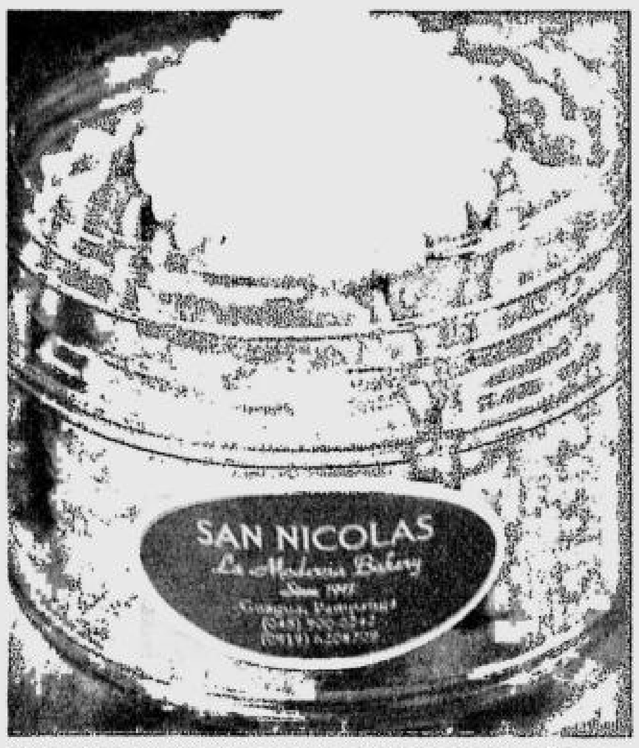

COOKIES with the image of the patron saint of children

COOKIES shaped like the national flower JIM GUIAO PUNZALAN

Pampanga goodies now in Metro

LA MODERNA BAKERY IN Guagua, Pampanga, now on its 60th year, is making its specialty products available 7 a.m.-3 p.m. every Saturday at the Salcedo Village Saturday Market near the Makati Sports Club in Makati City.

Established in the early 1900s in the neighboring town of Sta. Rita by Pablo and Narcisa Narciso, La Moderna won a Gold Medal in the pre-war Philippine Exposition.

The Narcisos moved the bakery in 1947 to Guagua, in Plaza Burgos, where they were assured of an almost endless stream of customers especially on weekends.

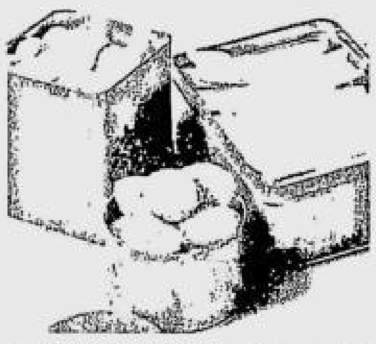
Customers came from as far north as Dagupan and as far south as Divisoria in Manila.

BEST-SELLING Empanaditas have *yema*-cashew fillings ANSONGCO

Butchie Narciso-Lagman, who has taken over the operations of La Moderna from her parents, says the bakery does traditional baking.

On offer at the Saturday market are Empanaditas, *yema* cashew-filled pastry; Sampaguita, creamy flower-shaped cookies; Masa Podrida, Filipino version of shortbread; San Nicolas, cookies introduced by the Augustinian friars made from fresh coconut milk; Petit Fortunes, tiny cups of rich, moist cashew cake bites; Turrones de Casoy, crunchy nougats introduced by the Dominicans during the Spanish period made from cashew, honey and egg whites wrapped in paper-like edible *oblea*; and Gorgoryas, traditional bite-size *dayap*-glazed fried bread fritters.

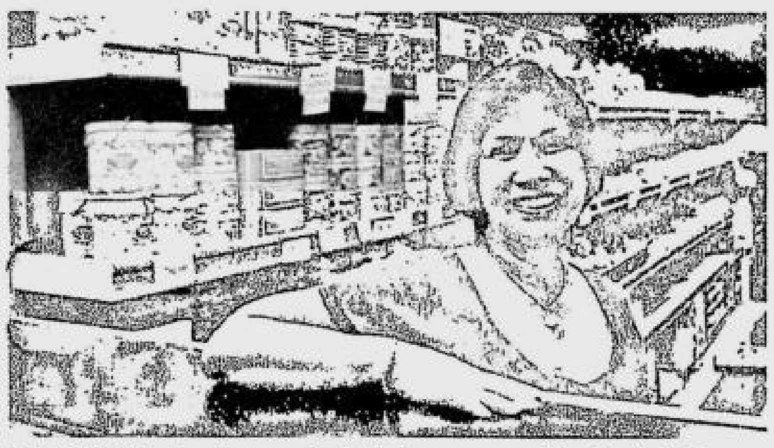
Freshly baked bread and pastries are available on request: *ensaymada, mamon, taisan, inipit,* garlic bread, brownies, butterscotch bars, chocolate cake, carrot cake, banana cake, yummies (moist cashew cake with cashew topping) and *barquillos*.


MASA Podrida, Turrones de Casoy and Petit Fortunes ANSONGCO

Made from the same old family recipes, La Moderna's baked goods now have longer shelf life and better packaging for gift-giving and *pasalubong*. Orders for and deliveries of gift baskets are accepted.

Other products available are *chicharon, butong pakwan, atchara*, and *taba ng talangka*.

La Moderna products are also available daily for order and pick-up at 637 Wyoming St., East Greenhills, Mandaluyong City. La Moderna Bakery and Grocery is located at Plaza Burgos, Guagua, Pampanga [tel: (6345) 900-0242]. E-mail lamodernabakery@yahoo.com.ph.


BUTCHIE Narciso-Lagman behind the counter of her family's 60-year-old bakery

Buy it and cook it

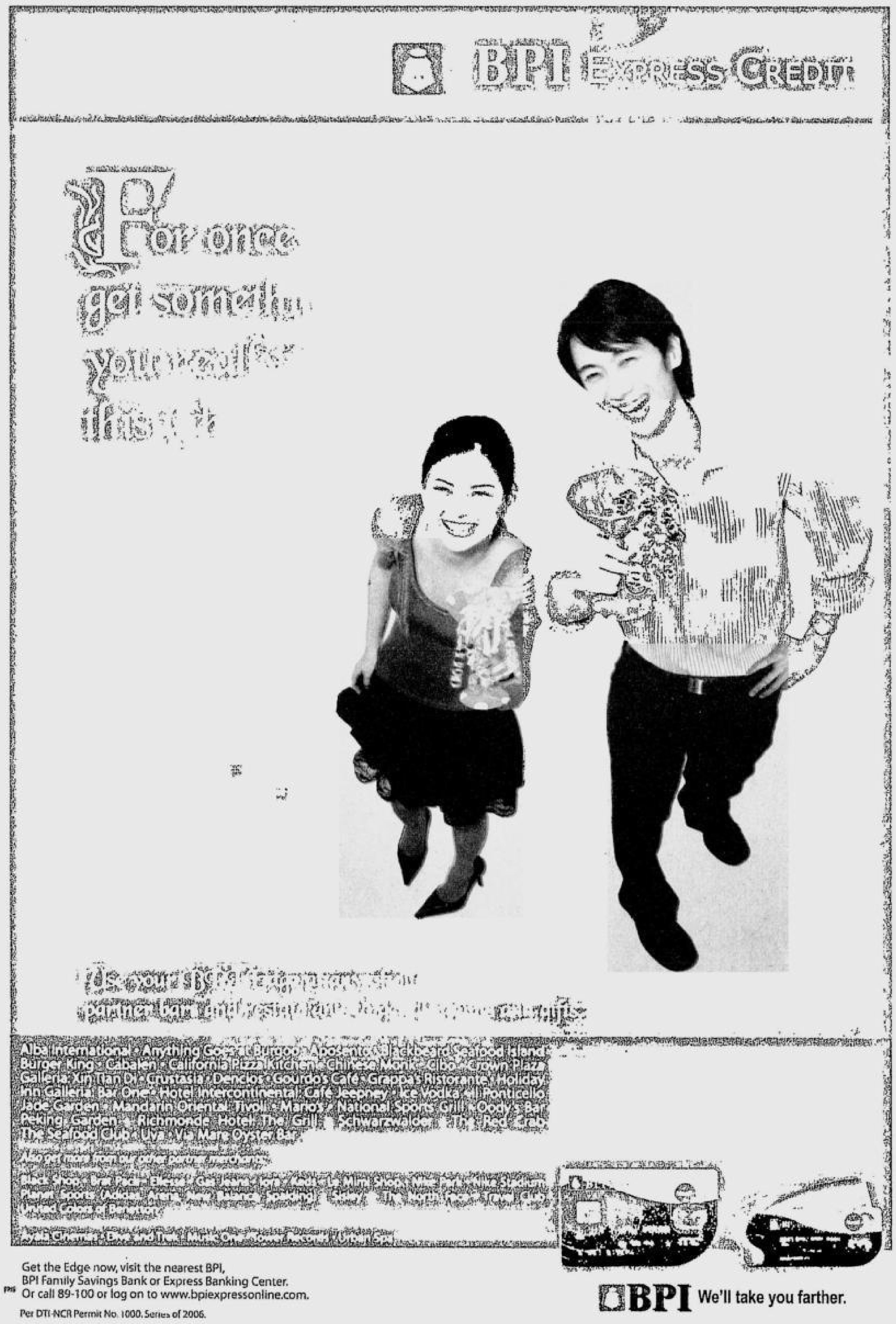
GET THE FRESHEST CATCH OF the day at Farmer's Market and learn to cook them yourself right away. The Center for Culinary Arts-Farmers Market offers creative short courses that lets you make something immediately of the stuff you buy.

Daily courses are being conducted that will help you prepare anything from appetizers, to main course, to desserts using the freshest ingredients from the market.

On Monday, learn about preparing bars, cookies and munchies in "Who Stole the Cookie from the Cookie Jar?" The Tuesday session, "Gutomako!," teaches the basics of sushi-making while Wednesday is for "Our Daily Bread." Thursday covers the basics of preparing fish, "Fish Tayo!"; and Friday is "Piece of Cake!," techniques for preparing all-time favorite cakes.

Saturday offers "Great Walls of Farmers Market" (popular Chinese dishes), "Barbecue Galore" (grilling with zing); and "Temptation Island" (rich chocolate secrets). Sunday features "American Idol" (good old American-style cooking), "Top of the World" (dishes that cook in under 20 minutes), and "Pasta't Tayo'y Magkasama" (pasta treats with a delightful twist). Weekday sessions are conducted 1-5 p.m. and 6-10 p.m. while weekend courses are held 7-11 a.m., 12-4 p.m. and 5-9 p.m.

A one-day course at CCA Farmer's Market costs P1,980. Call 4376058 or visit www.aranetacenter.net.



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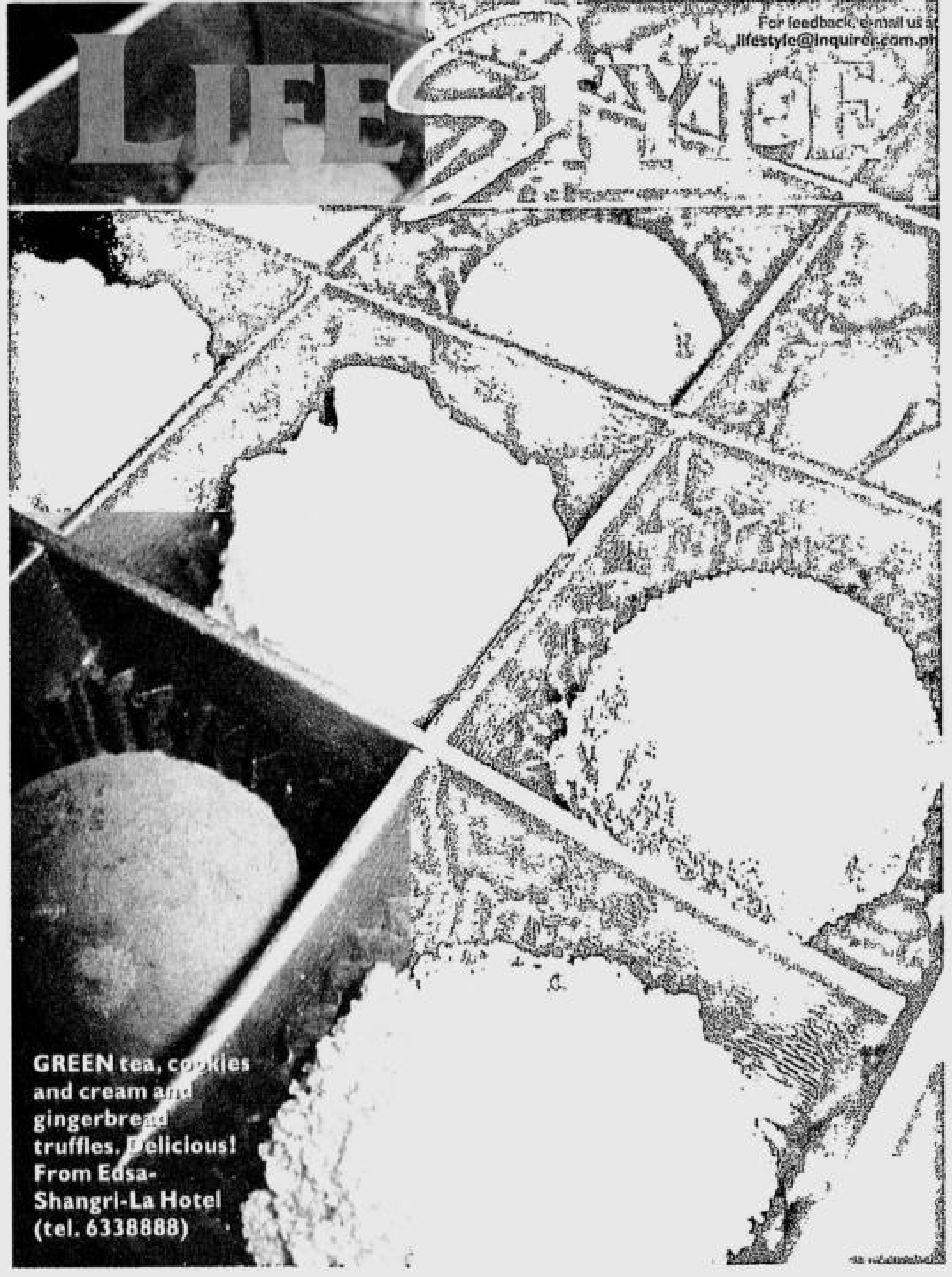


GREEN tea, cookies and cream and gingerbread truffles. Delicious! From Edsa-Shangri-La Hotel (tel. 6338888)

KITCHEN RESCUE

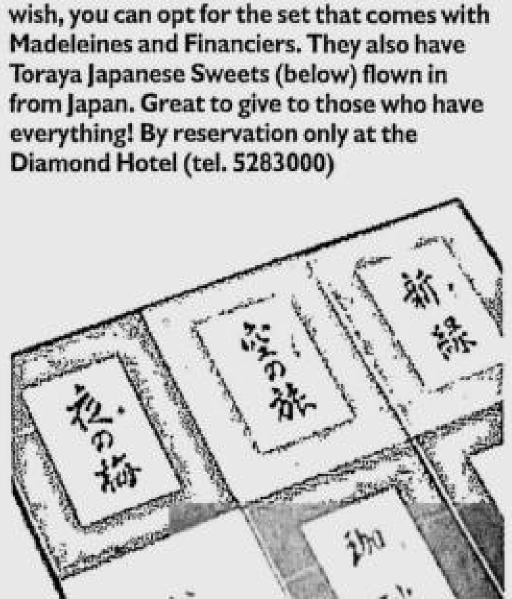
Reggie Aspiras

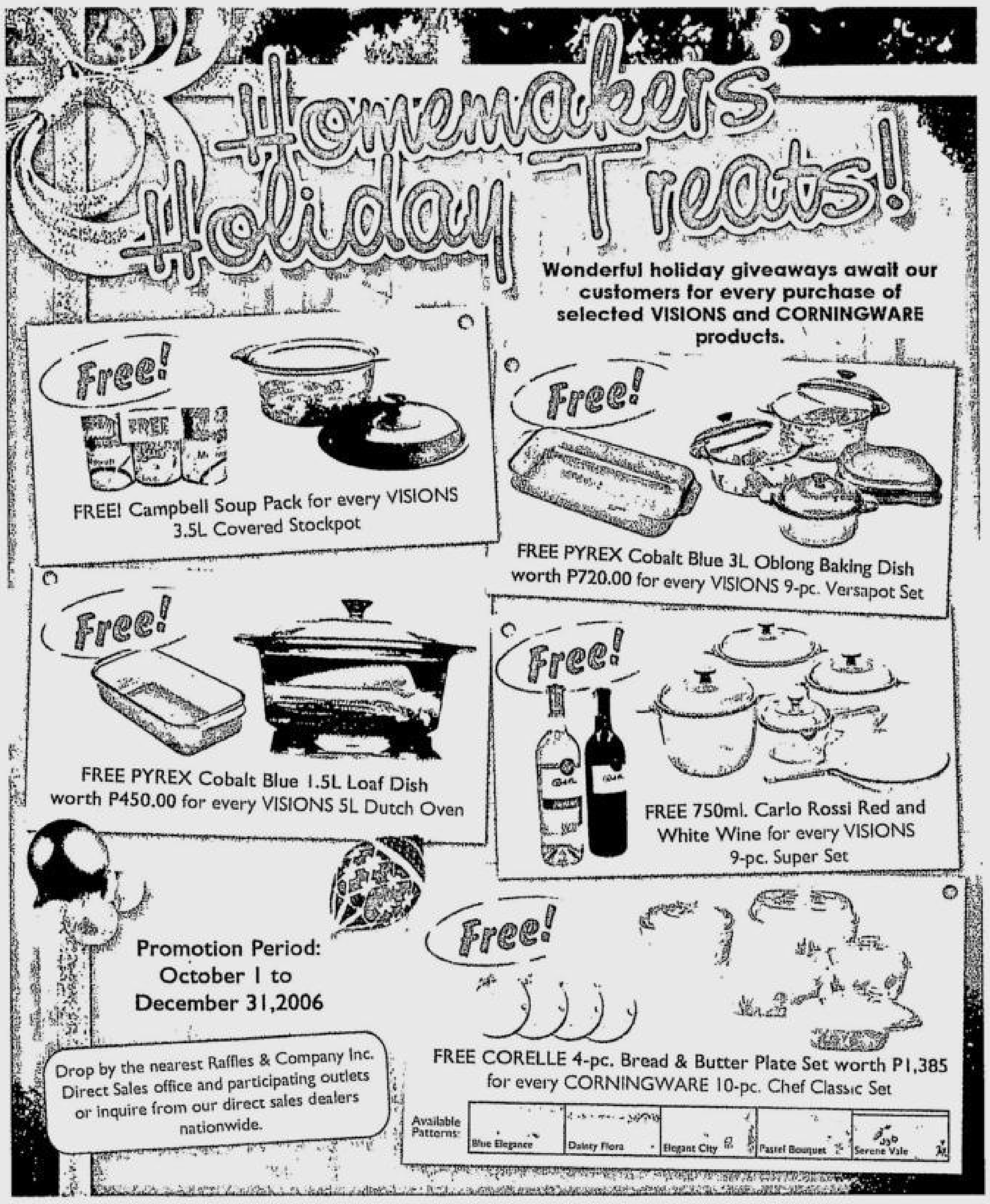
My favorite things to eat for Christmas

IT'S ALMOST CHRISTMAS! what better way to celebrate than to load those hips with sweets and treats? From treats in a jar to hams that remind you of Mom to desserts just flown in from a French pastry shop in Ginza, Tokyo to chocolate cakes truffles and pralines all new for this season—I can go on and on.

MY FAVORITE/D3

JUST in from the Henri Charpentier Pastry Shop in Ginza: heavenly crisp glazed pastry in pistachio, raspberry and orange. Terribly addicting alone or with coffee or tea! It just doesn't taste expensive, it looks expensive, too. The packaging is beautiful and, if you wish, you can opt for the set that comes with Madeleines and Financiers. They also have Toraya Japanese Sweets (below) flown in from Japan. Great to give to those who have everything! By reservation only at the Diamond Hotel (tel. 5283000)

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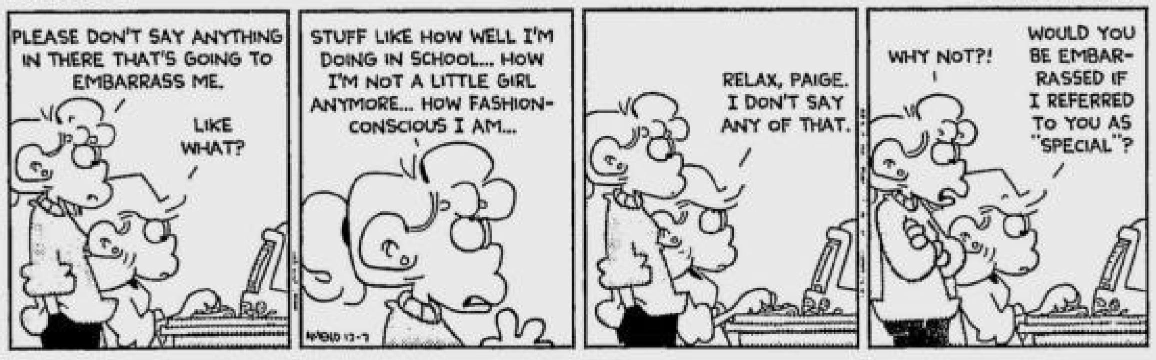
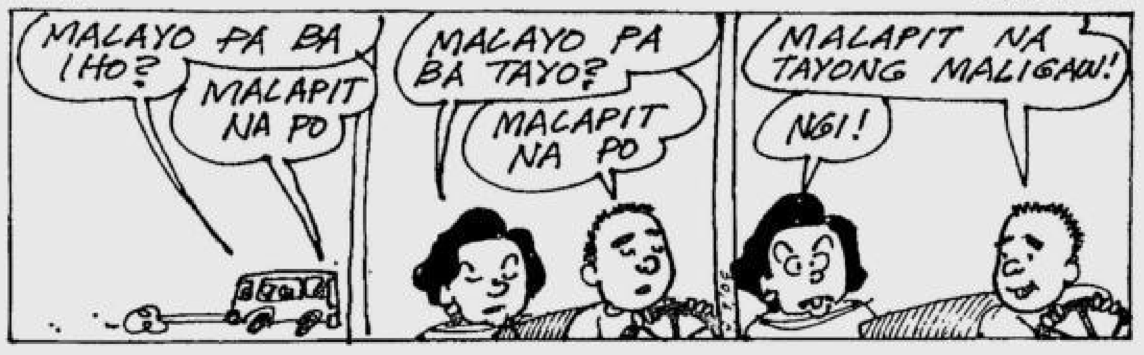
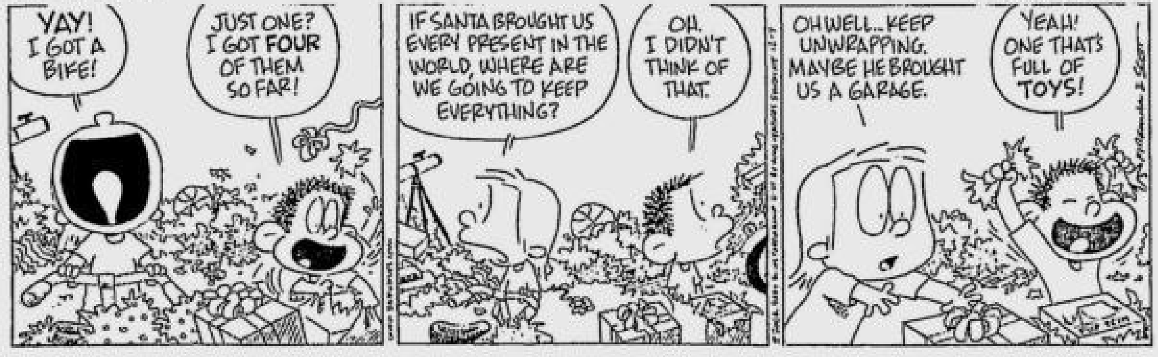
FOXTROT
BY BILL AMEND


PLEASE DON'T SAY ANYTHING IN THERE THAT'S GOING TO EMBARRASS ME.
LIKE WHAT?
STUFF LIKE HOW WELL I'M DOING IN SCHOOL... HOW I'M NOT A LITTLE GIRL ANYMORE... HOW FASHION-CONSCIOUS I AM...
RELAX, PAIGE. I DON'T SAY ANY OF THAT.
WHY NOT?!
WOULD YOU BE EMBARRASSED IF I REFERRED TO YOU AS "SPECIAL"?
AMEND 12-7

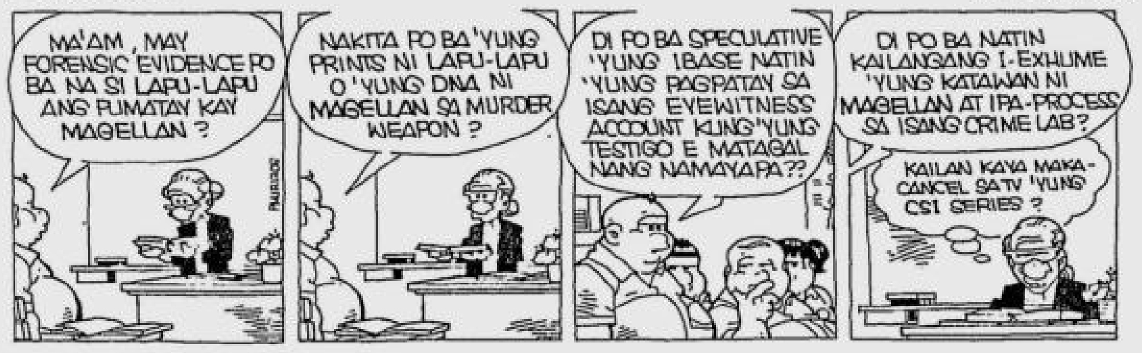
A. LIPIN
BY JESS ABRERA


MALAYO PA BA IHO?
MALAPIT NA PO
MALAYO PA BA TAYO?
MALAPIT NA PO
MALAPIT NA TAYONG MALIGAW!
NGI!

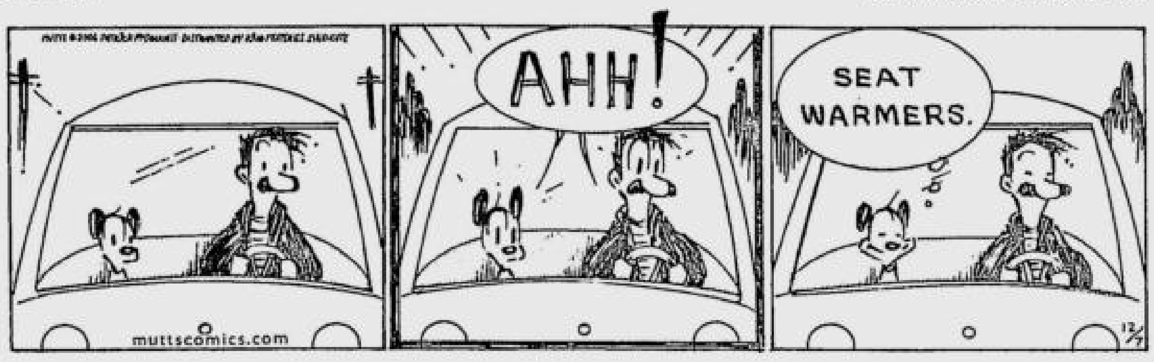
BABY BLUES
BY JERRY SCOTT


YAY! I GOT A BIKE!
JUST ONE? I GOT FOUR OF THEM SO FAR!
IF SANTA BROUGHT US EVERY PRESENT IN THE WORLD, WHERE ARE WE GOING TO KEEP EVERYTHING?
OH. I DIDN'T THINK OF THAT.
OH WELL... KEEP UNWRAPPING. MAYBE HE BROUGHT US A GARAGE.
YEAH! ONE THAT'S FULL OF TOYS!

PUGAD BABOY
BY P.M. JUNIOR


MA'AM, MAY FORENSIC EVIDENCE PO BA NA SI LAPU-LAPU ANG PUMATAY KAY MAGELLAN?
NAKITA PO BA 'YUNG PRINTS NI LAPU-LAPU O 'YUNG DNA NI MAGELLAN SA MURDER WEAPON?
DI PO BA SPECULATIVE 'YUNG IBASE NATIN 'YUNG PAGPATAY SA ISANG EYEWITNESS ACCOUNT KUNG 'YUNG TESTIGO E MATAGAL NANG NAMAYAPA??
DI PO BA NATIN KAILANGANG I-EXHUME 'YUNG KATAWAN NI MAGELLAN AT IPA-PROCESS SA ISANG CRIME LAB?
KAILAN KAYA MAKA-CANCEL SA TV 'YUNG CSI SERIES?

MUTTS
BY PATRICK McDONNELL


MUTTS ©2006 PATRICK McDONNELL DISTRIBUTED BY KING FEATURES SYNDICATE
AHH!
SEAT WARMERS.
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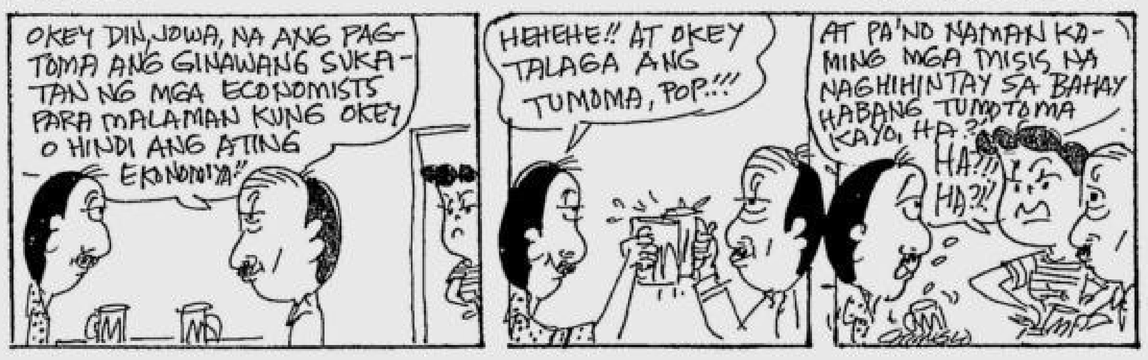
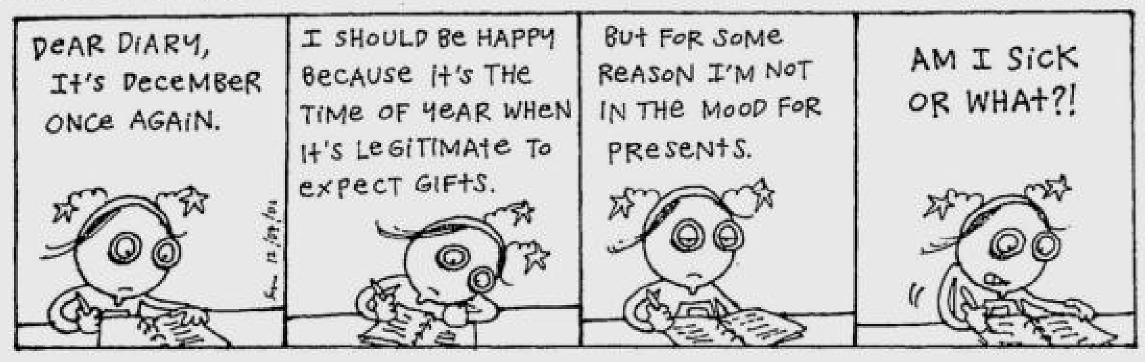
12/7

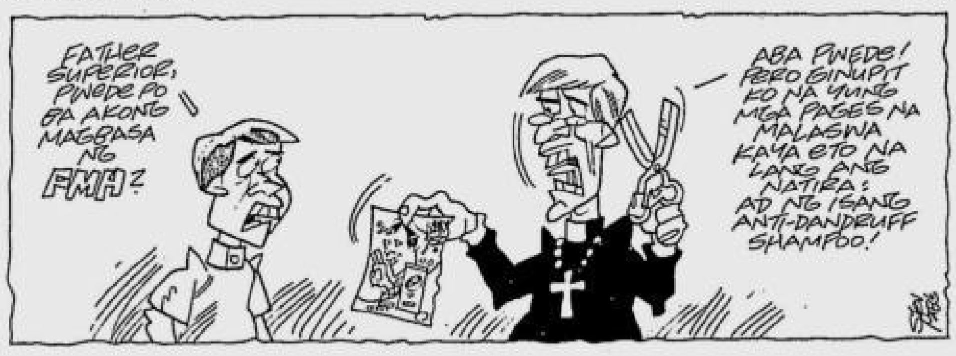
LOVEKNOTS
BY ELIZABETH CHIONGLO


OKEY DIN, JOWA, NA ANG PAGTOMA ANG GINAWANG SUKATAN NG MGA ECONOMISTS PARA MALAMAN KUNG OKEY O HINDI ANG ATING EKONOMIYA!
HEHEHE!! AT OKEY TALAGA ANG TUMOMA, POP!!!
AT PA'NO NAMAN KAMING MGA MISIS NA NAGHIHINTAY SA BAHAY HABANG TUMOTOMA KAYO, HA?
HA!!! HA?!!

ATOMO AND WEBOY
BY LYRA GARCELLANO

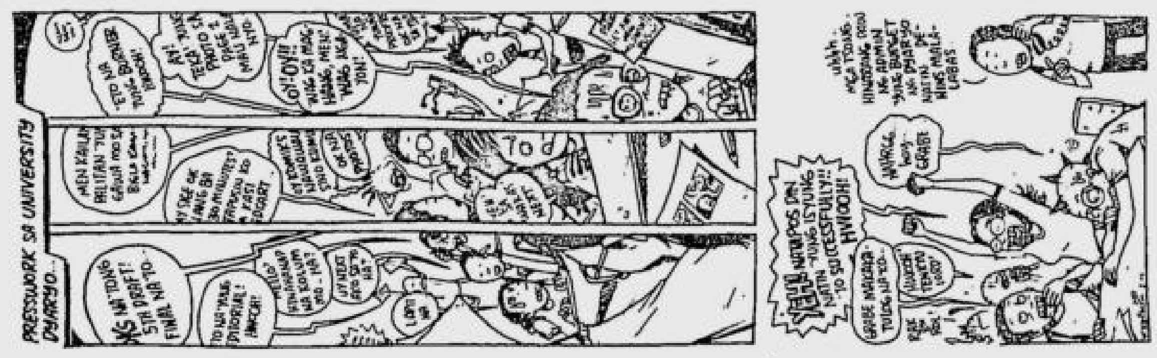

DEAR DIARY, IT'S DECEMBER ONCE AGAIN.
I SHOULD BE HAPPY BECAUSE IT'S THE TIME OF YEAR WHEN IT'S LEGITIMATE TO EXPECT GIFTS.
BUT FOR SOME REASON I'M NOT IN THE MOOD FOR PRESENTS.
AM I SICK OR WHAT?!

DIVINE COMEDY
BY STEVEN PABALINAS

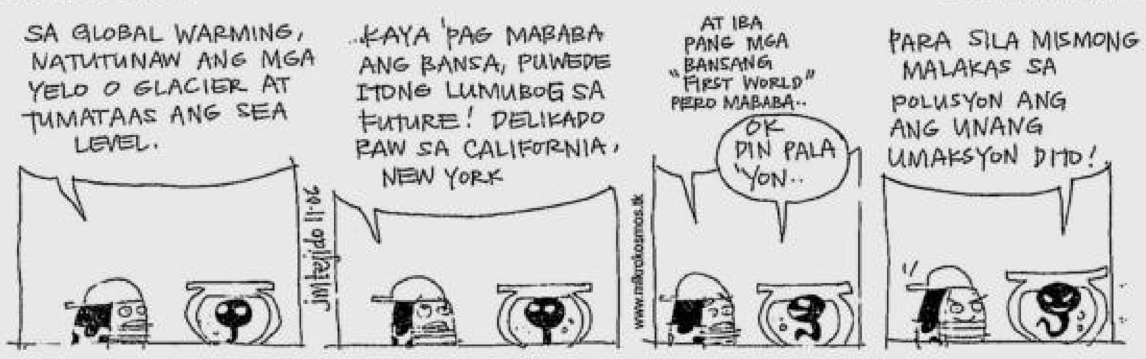

FATHER SUPERIOR, PWEDE PO BA AKONG MAGBASA NG FHM?
ABA PWEDE! PERO GINUPIT KO NA YUNG MGA PAGES NA MALASWA KAYA ETO NA LANG ANG NATIRA: AD NG ISANG ANTI-DANDRUFF SHAMPOO!

HOW SEMINARY FORMATORS TRAIN THEIR SEMINARIANS TO BECOME PERPETUAL CELIBATES

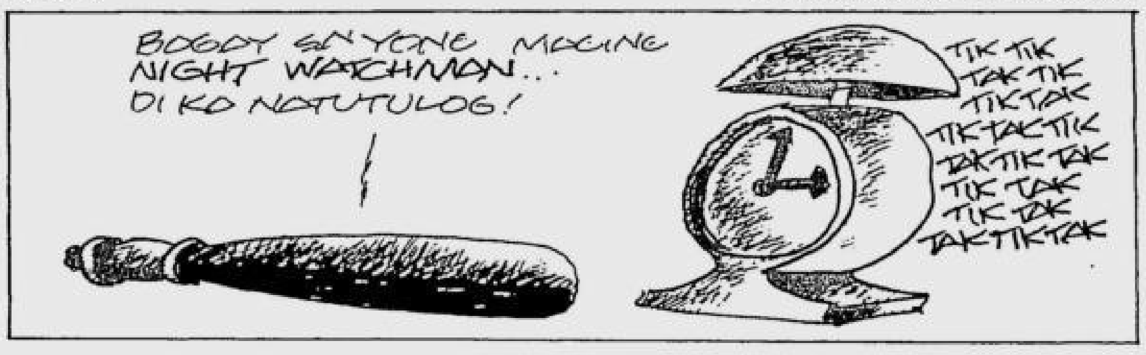
KIKO MACHINE
BY MANIX ABRERA


PRESSWORK SA UNIVERSITY DYARYO...

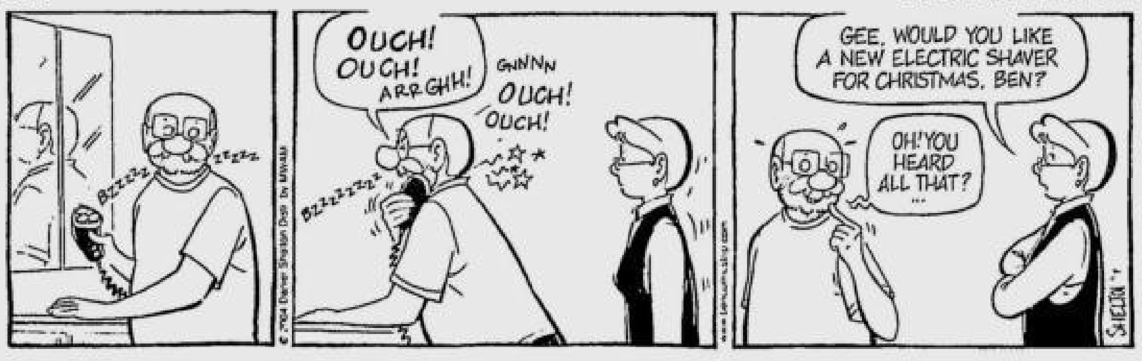
MIKROKOSMOS
BY JOMIKE TEJIDO


SA GLOBAL WARMING, NATUTUNAW ANG MGA YELO O GLACIER AT TUMATAAS ANG SEA LEVEL.
KAYA 'PAG MABABA ANG BANSA, PUWEDE ITONG LUMUBOG SA FUTURE! DELIKADO RAW SA CALIFORNIA, NEW YORK
AT IBA PANG MGA BANSANG "FIRST WORLD" PERO MABABA..
OK DIN PALA 'YON..
PARA SILA MISMONG MALAKAS SA POLUSYON ANG ANG UNANG UMAKSYON DITO!
jmtejido 11-06
www.mikrokosmos.tk

TULDOK
BY PAPU AND TATUM MILAMBILING


BOGDY SA'YONG MAGING NIGHT WATCHMAN... DI KO NATUTULOG!
TIK TIK TAK TIK TIK TAK TIK TAK TIK TAK TIK TAK TIK TIK TAK TIK TAK TIK TAK TAK TIK TAK

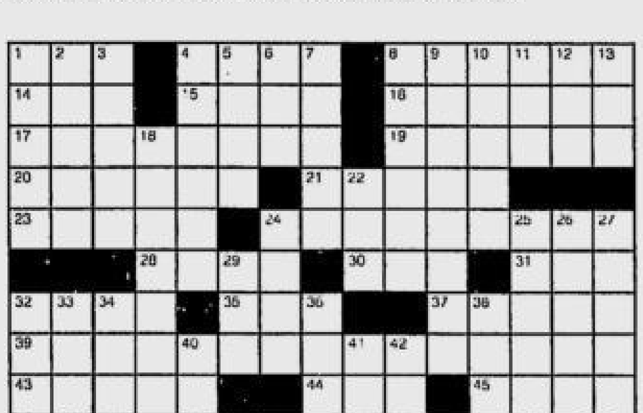
BEN
BY DANIEL SHELTON


BZZZZZ
OUCH! OUCH! ARRGHH!
GNNN OUCH! OUCH!
GEE, WOULD YOU LIKE A NEW ELECTRIC SHAVER FOR CHRISTMAS, BEN?
OH! YOU HEARD ALL THAT?
SHELTON

DAILY CROSSWORD

ACROSS
1 Hair for sale
4 Cicatrix
8 Right to use
14 Compass point
15 Adhesive strip
16 Papeete's location
17 Start of Evan Esar quote
19 Window treatment
20 Passed gossip
21 Total
23 Whimsical
24 Part 2 of quote
28 Amateurish painting
30 Paul Anka's "__ Beso"
31 Appendage
32 Tours summers
35 Yellow or Black
37 Radio, TV, etc.
39 Part 3 of quote
43 England's __ Downs
44 Ottoman Empire official
45 Pravda's news agcy.
46 "O sole __"
47 Idaho hrs.
50 Actor Epps
52 Part 4 of quote
55 Actor Novarro
59 French farewell
60 Lead astray
61 Ship's financial officer
64 End of quote
66 Injury showing discoloration
67 Punta del __
68 Mortar trough
69 Nicaraguan nap
70 Capone's nemesis
71 NATO cousin

DOWN
1 Strange
2 Extrapolate
3 Arrive at
4 Stanley Kowalski's cry
5 Jack or joker
6 Simian
7 Pine sap
8 Turns at the plate
9 Report in, in a way
10 Red pepper pod
11 One for the Germans
12 Part of PST
13 Bro's counterpart
18 Remains loyal
22 "Bill __, the Science Guy"
24 Help on a heist
25 Gymnast Comaneci
26 Breakfast side
27 Accumulate
29 Naval letters
32 Watery swelling
33 Lukewarm
34 News correspondent David
36 I've got it!
38 Erik of "CHiPs"
40 Indelicate
41 Eager
42 Highland cap
48 Meadowsweet
49 Deadlock
51 Sharp ridges
53 Desert greenery
54 Guiding spirit in Roman myth
56 Much in Mazatlan
57 Lorena of the LPGA
58 Requisites
60 Fast jets, for short
61 "Nova" network
62 Tell's canton
63 Regret bitterly
65 Function



By Alan P. Olschwang
Huntington Beach, CA
12/7/06

Wednesday's Puzzle Solved

R	Y	E		R	O	N	D	O		L	I	T	E	R
E	E	L		O	R	I	O	N		O	P	E	R	A
P	L	A	I	N	C	L	O	T	H	E	S	M	A	N
A	L	I	N	E	S			A	E	S	O	P		
S	E	N	S	E		G	A	P	E	S		E	G	G
T	R	E	T		R	A	T	E	D		F	R	A	U
			A	B	A	F	T			N	O	E	L	S
	M	A	N	O	F	F	E	W	W	O	R	D	S	
E	R	I	C	A			S	A	R	G	E			
P	E	R	E		A	R	T	S	Y		S	C	O	T
A	D	S		S	M	A	S	H		A	T	A	R	I
		T	O	T	E	M			A	R	E	N	A	S
P	E	R	S	O	N	A	N	O	N	G	R	A	T	A
A	V	I	L	A		D	R	A	N	O		D	O	N
R	E	P	O	S		A	A	R	O	N		A	R	E

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12/7/06

HOROSCOPE

YOU BORN TODAY: You're a first-rate individualist. You have your own style; you do things your own way. You're intelligent and imaginative. You're attracted to characters and other independent thinkers. Quite often, you try many fields before you choose what you want. You stay busy with family and friends. The year ahead is full of exciting, new beginnings. Open any door!

Birthdate of: C. Thomas Howell, actor; Terrell Owens, football wide receiver; Noam Chomsky, writer.

ARIES (March 21 to April 19): Avoid heated arguments about politics, religion or racial issues. It's very easy to get involved in something like this today. Just remember: There are none so deaf as those who are wearing headphones.

TAURUS (April 20 to May 20): This is a poor day to try to divide something or deal with shared property. You feel territorial and possessive. (And so does everybody else.)

GEMINI (May 21 to June 20): You might become strongly attracted to someone today. A casual relationship might deepen into a serious commitment! This is because your attraction is hot and intense!

CANCER (June 21 to July 22): Whatever you do today at work, you'll attack it with ferocity. You feel very strongly about how to make improvements or how to introduce reforms or better ways of doing things

LEO (July 23 to Aug. 22): You feel very passionate about life today. Romantic relationships that begin now will definitely be memorable! Sports and the arts hold excitement for you

VIRGO (Aug. 23 to Sept. 22): This is a wonderful day to redecorate bathrooms or improve plumbing—or, for that matter, to improve any part of your home. Family discussions are intense today. Listen carefully.

LIBRA (Sept. 23 to Oct. 22): All your communication with others is unusually emotional or intense today. Nothing is halfway; everything is either black or white. (This makes compromise difficult.)

SCORPIO (Oct. 23 to Nov. 21): You're practically obsessed with buying something today. Something to do with your cash flow has you by the throat. You can't wait any longer. This same intensity might apply to how you want to earn money as well.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22 to Dec. 21): You might feel very attracted to someone today. (Your gonads are in overdrive.) Quite likely, you'll be flirting with someone before the day is over

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22 to Jan. 19): Either your ambition or your intense curiosity about something will make you dig deep for answers today. In doing so, you might come up with some juicy secrets!

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20 to Feb. 18): This is the kind of day when lovers can become friends and friends can become lovers. People easily feel a strong attraction to each other.

PISCES (Feb. 19 to March 20): Some of you might develop a crush on your boss. Others will want to speak out (very passionately) about issues that are close to your heart.

CONCEPTIS SU DOKU

Conceptis Sudoku by Dave Green

7								4
			3		2			
		3	9	6		5		
	8					7	6	
		7				3		
	2	4					1	
		1		4	3	9		
			7		8			
4								6

Difficulty Level ★★★ 12/07

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HOW TO PLAY SU DOKU

Fill the grid so that every column, every row and every 3x3 box contains the digits 1 to 9.
Tips and program at www.sudoku.com

Answer to previous puzzle

6	3	8	2	5	7	1	9	4
7	4	1	9	3	6	2	5	8
9	2	5	8	1	4	3	7	6
1	6	4	3	9	8	5	2	7
8	9	7	5	4	2	6	3	1
3	5	2	6	7	1	4	8	9
4	8	9	1	2	5	7	6	3
2	1	6	7	8	3	9	4	5
5	7	3	4	6	9	8	1	2

Difficulty Level ★★★

My favorite things to eat for Christmas

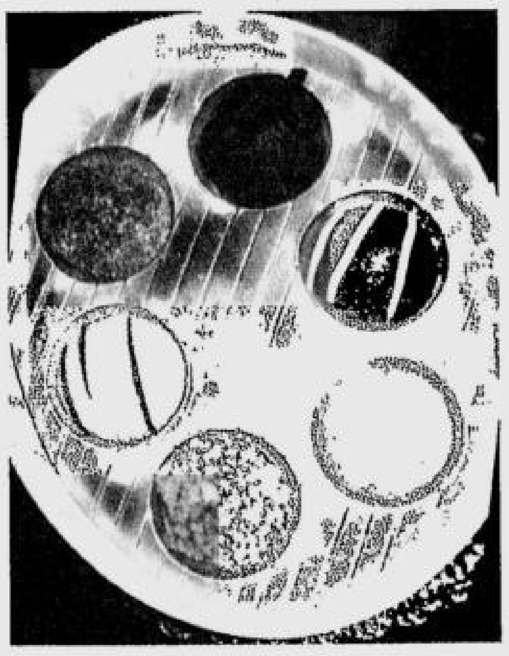
From page D1

Ihoiana cake. A sinfully rich chocolate cake with silky layers of dark chocolate mousse, over a crisp base. Let not its size deceive you. For a cake that is 6x6, the play of textures and chocolate flavor intensities is amazing! From Makati Shangri-La Hotel (tel. 8138888).

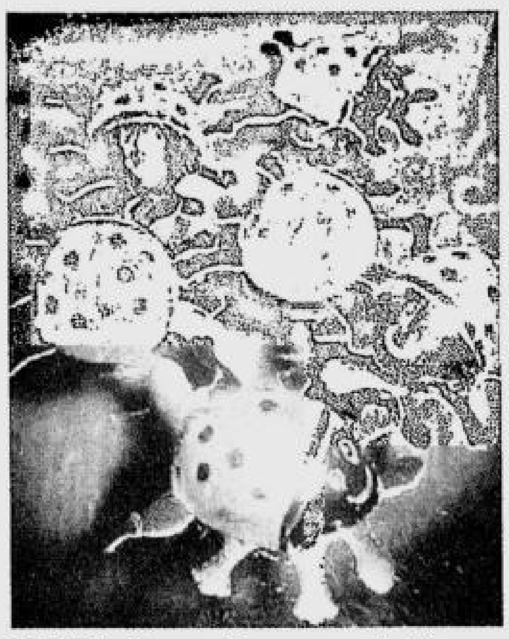
Coconut praline. To think that I really don't like combining chocolate and coconut. But this one, made of white chocolate, is a masterpiece! From Manila Pavillion (tel. 5261212).

Rum cakes for a cause. Remember the rum cake craze in the '90s? Well, apart from Anna Zosa, we have her Aunt Sandy to thank for it. She started it all! Unfortunately, she left us a few years back and now, her husband, Louie is ill. Would you consider giving rum cakes for Christmas? Sales generated will directly go to a fund to help Louie (tels. 8260552 and 7275013).

E-mail the author at raspiras@inquirer.com.ph



TRUFFLES in little white satin packages with chords of gold. The Lime, Barako Coffee, Lemon Myrtle, Lambanog and Banana flavors are divine. From Peninsula Hotel Manila (tel. 8872888).

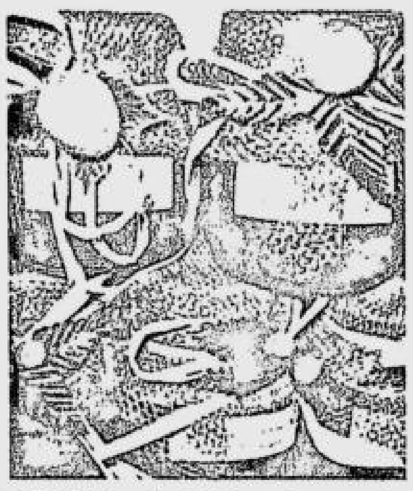


MUNZ Pralines melt in your mouth. Nice, smooth, rich and silky finish. Best part is it comes in the shape of ladybugs. I think it makes a great gift for the whole family! From Santis (tels. 8441154, 7226274 and 6388969)

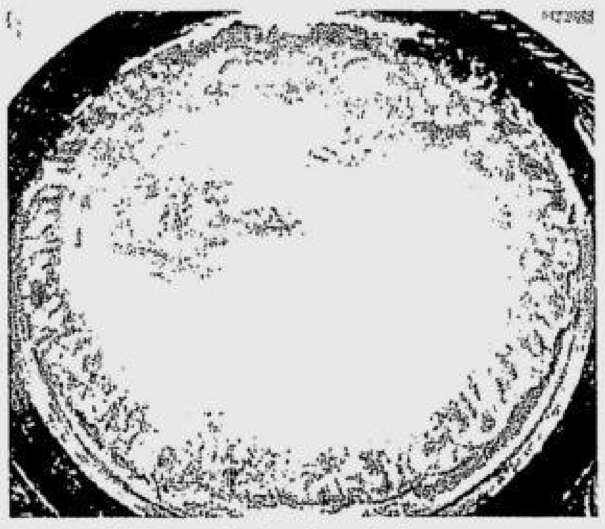
TIRED of the usual *pan de sal* and *ensaymada* to take with your morning cup of coffee? Since it's the season to be decadent, I urge you to try the Balocco Tiramisu. Makes for great breakfast bread stuffed with *tiramisu* cream filling. From Santis (tels. 8441154, 7226274 and 6388969)

Merry Christmas

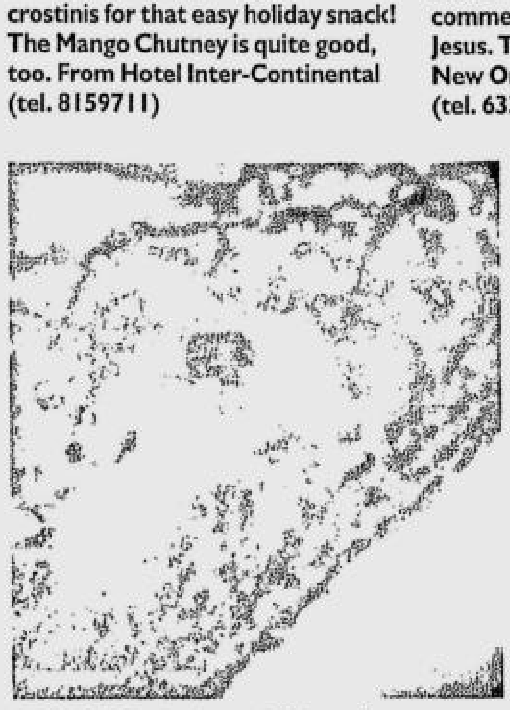
THE CRAFTSMANSHIP on these little Santas made of chocolate and Frangelico mousse is something else. If you ask me, just receiving a box filled with these will make me very happy! And while you're at it, you must, must, must get their Pecan Pie! It is the absolute best! Nice, rich and gooey, it's everything a pecan pie should be. From Mandarin Oriental (tel. 7508888)



TREATS in a jar. My favorites are the Prince Albert Sun-dried Tomato Paste and the Olive Tapenade. Use them for pasta or just spread on to crostinis for that easy holiday snack! The Mango Chutney is quite good, too. From Hotel Inter-Continental (tel. 8159711)



KING CAKE. A small token is tucked away somewhere in the cake! It all began in 12th-century France. It was baked on the eve of Jan. 6 to commemorate the visit of the three kings to baby Jesus. This French tradition has become a practice in New Orleans during Mardi Gras. From Crowne Plaza (tel. 6337222)



GOLDEN Fruitcake so delicious that even non-lovers of fruit cake will enjoy it. It is so buttery, with the perfect blend of soaking liquor. If you cannot eat at least half in one sitting, I would think that to be disappointing! From Costa Brava (tel. 8966872)

CHEF David Pardo de Ayala cooks ham like mom used to—nice, tender and succulent, with a sauce that is sweet though perfectly spiced. Choose from Smoke Glazed with Spiced Sugar, Baked Smoked with Apple Dijon, and Brown Sugar Bakes with Spiced Pears. From Discovery Suites (tel. 5261212)

Youngblood 3
edited by Jorge V. Aruta and Ruel S. De Vera

BE THERE FOR THE NEW BLOOD.

The long wait is over as the hottest local anthology returns: Youngblood³ is in the house, loaded with the best essays from 1999 to 2004 in the most concentrated Youngblood package yet. This is the Filipino youth at their most honest and most eloquent. Here are the essays that matter from the newspaper that started it all. Youngblood³ is the young Filipino - unplugged.

YOUNGBLOOD
Edited by Jorge V. Aruta and Ruel S. De Vera

CELEBRATE THE CONTINUING EVOLUTION OF GENERATION.
POWERBOOKS LIVE 9 4 - 6 PM

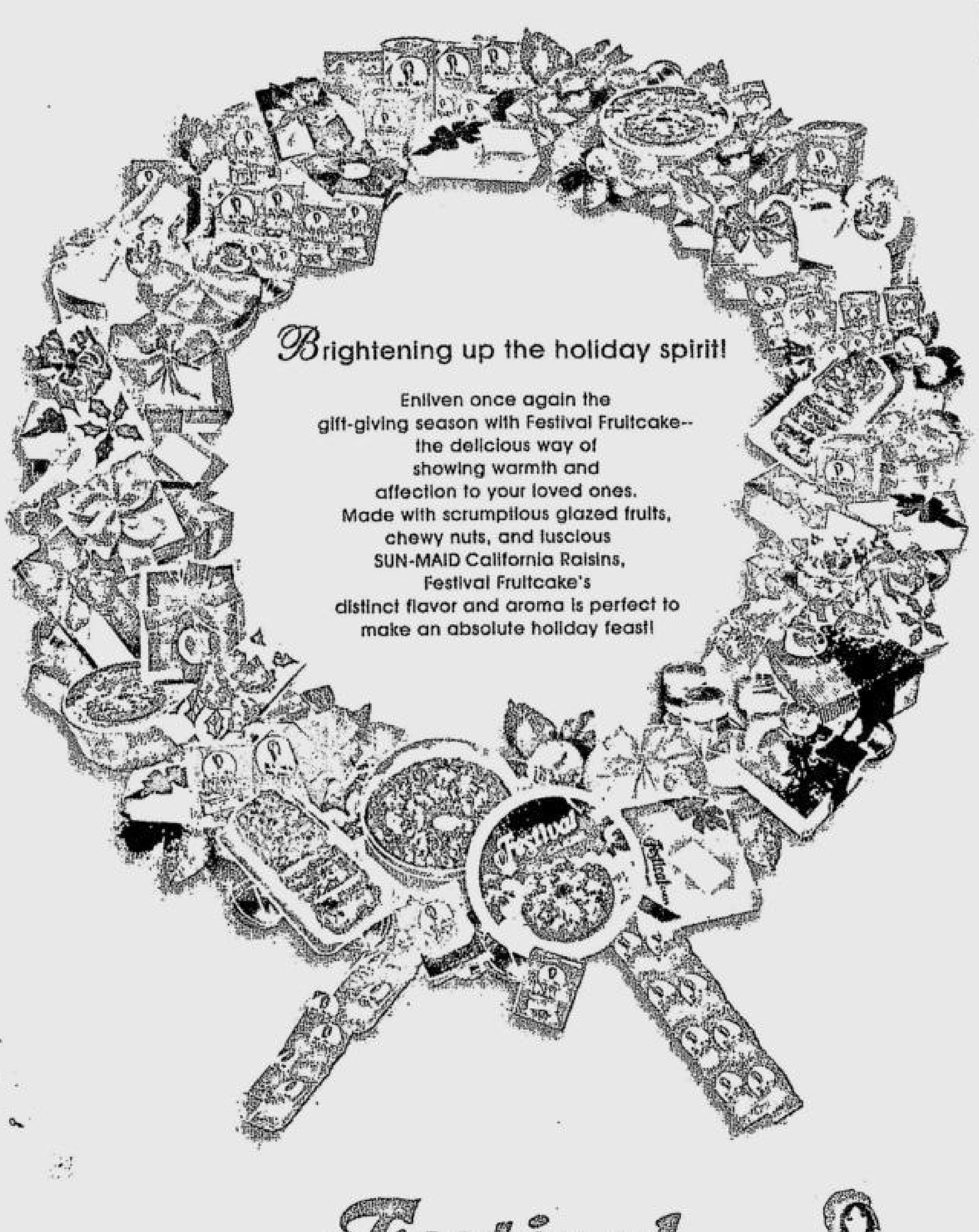
The following contributors are invited:
Jules Alcantara / Rain Reyes / Jose Leo Lemuel G. Caparas Jr. / Cinnamon Marcelo / Rodney L. Barayuga / Rio Cobcobo / Prairie Dawn / Ron Darvin / Agnes Fidelis C. Gloria-Pinzon / Elaine P. Lim / Purple / Ann Aberin / Squire / Alex Avila / Fitz Gerard Villafuerte / Windi Remmi Mondiguing Tapawan / Pearlsha Abubakar / Blagko / Lou Albano / Angelo Hernandez / Claudette M. Llarena / Connie Gundayao / Maria del Rosario / Karen Mae V. Gican / B / Jerick T. Aguilar / Malou I. Redome / Jen Esguerra / Erin Batac / Ella Reyes / Eder S. Mutuc, M.D. / Donalyne Rasalan Lampa / Carlos Alfonso Q. Santos / Christela Cabreros / Adelfo Cyrus Alanis / Aleja F. Martinez / Zvach / Matthias / Raiza Katrina Abubakar / Jessica Brillantes / Gabriella S. Martelino / Sherie S. Sta. Cruz / Janie S. Cambri / Jonas Soltes / Jael Wenceslao / Paolo L. Azurin / Diana Emlano / Kay Stephanie Veloso / TJ / Dawn Isobel Yu Aquino / Roel A. Andag / Paolo David / Florianne Jimenez

The launch will be preceded by a **special journalism workshop** from 1 - 4 PM also at **PowerBooks Live**!

The workshop features the following topics and speakers: **The News Cycle** - Mr. John Nery, **Journalism Ethics** - Ms. Lorna Kalaw-Tirol, **The Newspaper Process** - Ms. Megi Garcia, and the **Open Forum** with the special participation of Mr. Jorge V. Aruta. The workshop would be perfect for members of school publications, moderators, masscomm students and journ majors. For inquiries, please call 897-8808 and look for Ms. Chris Vida.

Dare to ask. Be an Inquirer.

INQUIRER books
Unilever



*B*rightening up the holiday spirit!

Enliven once again the gift-giving season with Festival Fruitcake-- the delicious way of showing warmth and affection to your loved ones. Made with scrumptious glazed fruits, chewy nuts, and luscious SUN-MAID California Raisins, Festival Fruitcake's distinct flavor and aroma is perfect to make an absolute holiday feast!

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Fruit Cake
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Family togetherness

DINING-OUT

RESTAURANT 5 offers a complimentary brunch buffet for one person, for every group of five paying guests. The buffet is priced at P795 per person. Sunday Brunch is available every Sunday, 11 a.m.-2 p.m. Restaurant 5 is on the 5/F of Discovery Suites, 25 ADB Ave., Ortigas Center, Pasig. Call 6838222 and 6838255.

BANGUS SPECIALTY RESTAURANT celebrates Pinoy family togetherness during meals with Kaing Yaman. Families can enjoy generous portions of all-time favorites, such as Plain Bulalo Soup, Rellenong Manok, Lumpiang Capampangan, Bam-I, Grilled Milkfish Belly with Sampaloc Candy Sauce, Green and Ripe Mango Salad with Bangus Longganisa slices. For dessert, they can have Special Turon na Saging and wash it down with chilled Sago at Gulaman. Call Bangus Greenhills at 7253038, 7228750; Bangus Galleria 6350561 and Bangus SM Mall of Asia 5560386. Visit www.bangusrepublic.com or e-mail bangusrepublic@yahoo.com.

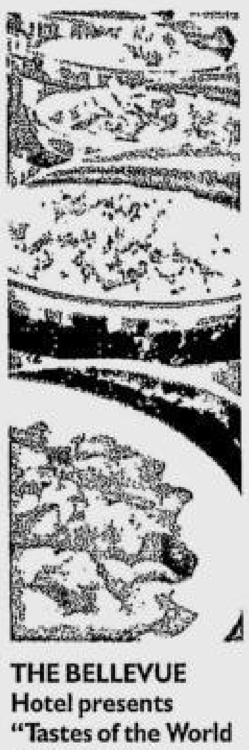
PEKING Garden offers 30-percent discount on its Peking duck item until Dec. 19. The special treat is good for dine-in and a la carte orders only (set menus not included). The restaurant (Glorietta 2, Ayala Center, Makati) also offers various special set menus.

KOREANA Restaurant serves special Korean dishes, such as Bulgogi, Japchae (Korean transparent noodles) and Beef Stew. Also on the menu are charcoal-grilled "Dak Kalbi" (chicken barbecue), So Kalbi (beef barbecue), and Dejie Kalbi (pork barbecue). Appetizers and desserts are free. Koreana also has a Sashimi and Sushi bar. Located at Westgate Center, Filinvest Corporate City, Alabang, Muntinlupa City, Koreana is open daily 11 a.m.-10 p.m. Call 7711104/05.

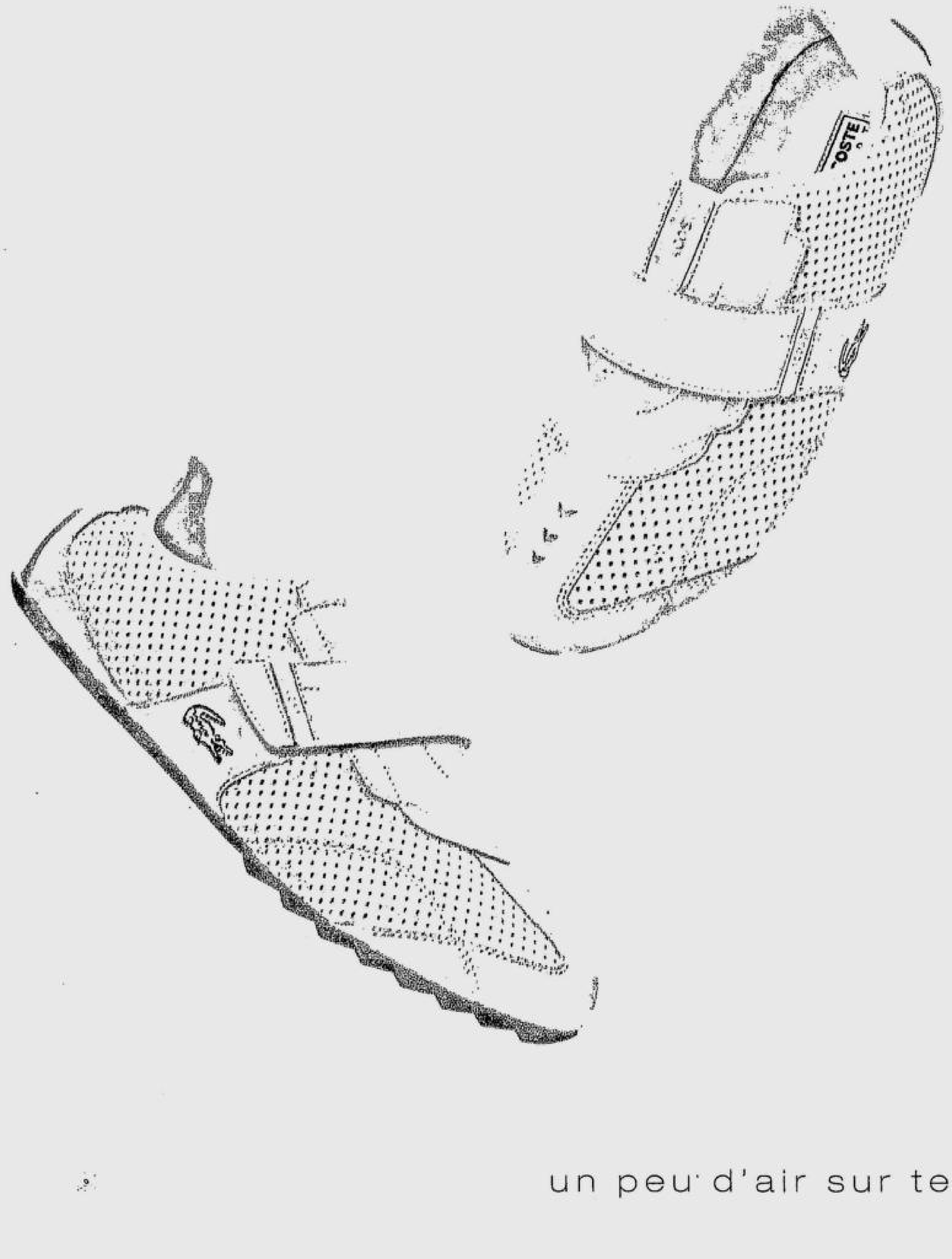
CASCADA presents Power Lunch menu consisting of Cream of Broccoli and Spinach Soup, the Shrimp Bisque with Capsicum Coulis, the Yuletide Fruit Salad and the Queso de Bola and Ham Quiche Salad. Main courses include Grilled Tenderloin served with Pesto Mashed Potato, Roasted Chicken and Roasted Turkey Breasts. For seafood lovers, there's the Cashew-crusted Fillet of Sole and the Prawns Thermidor. Power Lunch menu is available from 11 a.m.-3 p.m. Call 7574369.

LUK YUEN Noodle House offers the Chinese bento sets. There are three sets to choose from: the Chicken bento (with deep-fried chicken, stuffed eggplants, soy noodles, fried rice and sesame balls); the Pork bento (with sweet and sour pork, fried tofu, soy noodles, fried rice and sesame balls); and the Fish bento (lapu-lapu fillet with tausi, spring rolls, soy noodles, fried rice and sesame balls). Priced at P180 each. Luk Yuen has outlets at Glorietta 2, Ayala Center; Cash and Carry near Buendia; Paseo de Magallanes; Alabang Town Center; SM Megamall B; and Greenhills Shopping Center.

DISCOVERY Country Suites' Restaurant Verbena offers a Sunday Brunch with a six-course country-style menu. On the menu are Pan-Braised Red Snapper Fillet served with Grilled Tomatoes and Shrimp Bouillabaisse, Imported Beef Bourguignon with Baby Vegetables, Deep Red Wine Sauce and Potato Purée, and Discovery Suites' own version of Eggs Benedict. The brunch set menu is priced at P695+ per person. Call 4134567 (Tagaytay office) or 6838222 (Manila office).



THE BELLEVUE Hotel presents "Tastes of the World Buffet" until Dec. 9. The buffet is available for lunch and dinner at the Bellevue's Café d' Asie Restaurant. You can also order cakes and pastries as special gifts for your loved ones. Call 7718181.



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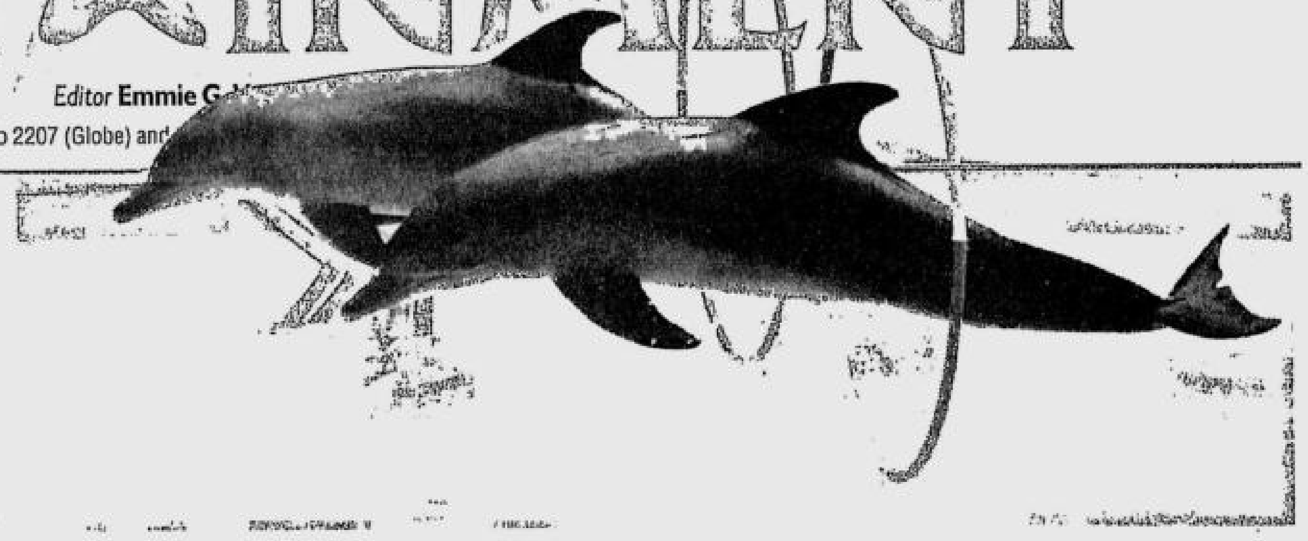
• SM Mall of Asia, Tel. No. 556-0479 • SM City Davao, Tel. No. (082) 297-2510 • Ayala Center Cebu, Tel. No. (032) 232-5455

ENTERTAINMENT

Editor Emmie G.

sms feedback: inquirer ent name/age/city/message to 2207 (Globe) and



TUTTI-FRUTTI
Oh, goody. We took a half-day off to meet these tireless, talented and thrilling performers at the Aquatorium by the Manila Bay. We threw decorum to the wind for a snapshot with the slippery stars and one really wet kiss. Talk about rewards. *Story on page E/6.*

Roars of approval at NU Rock Awards

By Pocholo Concepcion
Contributor

IT LASTED till 3 a.m. with no untoward incidents. For that alone, the 13th NU Rock Awards held on Dec. 1 at Manila World Trade Center deserves commendation.

Describing itself as "the premier rock awards show for Pinoy rockers," the annual event has continued to generate interest and excitement among listeners of NU 107. In the pre-MTV years, this FM station almost single-handedly promoted rock as a commercially viable force in the local music industry.

Amid the crowd's constant roar of approval and the joyful din of the live performances, some things could not escape notice:

The Eraserheads may be long gone, but three of its four members have never stopped making music. Ely Buendia

ROARS/ E4

DONG ABAY turned up in hot/cool gear.

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A Blemish Eraser That Really Works!

Picture-perfect skin can now be a reality with IPL Photorejuvenation Treatment. No other procedure has ever been developed that can accomplish so much with so little risk.

One satisfied client, Janet Ley, relates her happiness with IPL: "I like it. I really like it because after only my second treatment, my freckles are gone!"

IPL Photorejuvenation Treatment helps banish freckles, dark spots, and spider veins without a trace. According to Janet, "I believe my freckles became more prominent as I got older. So whenever I went out of the house, I would use face powder to cover them up. But now I don't use anything anymore because they're all gone! And now people would tell me that I have really nice, flawless skin."

IPL is a gentle, non-invasive treatment that uses a broad spectrum of light to treat the face, neck, chest, back, hands and virtually anywhere that sun damage or blemishes show. It uses the Intense Pulsed Light technology to correct a variety of skin conditions and skin imperfections: freckles, skin discoloration, signs of aging, age spots, unsightly spider veins, broken capillaries, rosacea and other blemishes. Facial Care Centre's Dr. Maria Isabelita Joya says, "IPL's amazing results include: better skin tone, reduced blotchiness, pigmentations and broken blood vessels, smoother surface texture, and a more youthful-looking skin."

To restore an overall youthful look, IPL can simultaneously treat a wide variety of skin concerns safely and effectively. The result: younger-looking skin and a clearer, even complexion. As another satisfied client, Dr. Ariel Torres, would attest: "I'm an avid golfer so I'm very much exposed to the sun. That's how I had freckles. And I've tried every whitening product you can possibly think of: whitening cream, whitening lotion, sunblock, scrub, I even bought this thing from Hong Kong that you're supposed to drink to lighten your skin...nothing! It lightens up your skin for a while but you can't expose yourself to the sun anymore. And for avid players like me, that's totally unthinkable! So when I tried IPL, I was really impressed. Just after the first treatment, there were already visible, dramatic results! IPL is really the only treatment that worked for me."

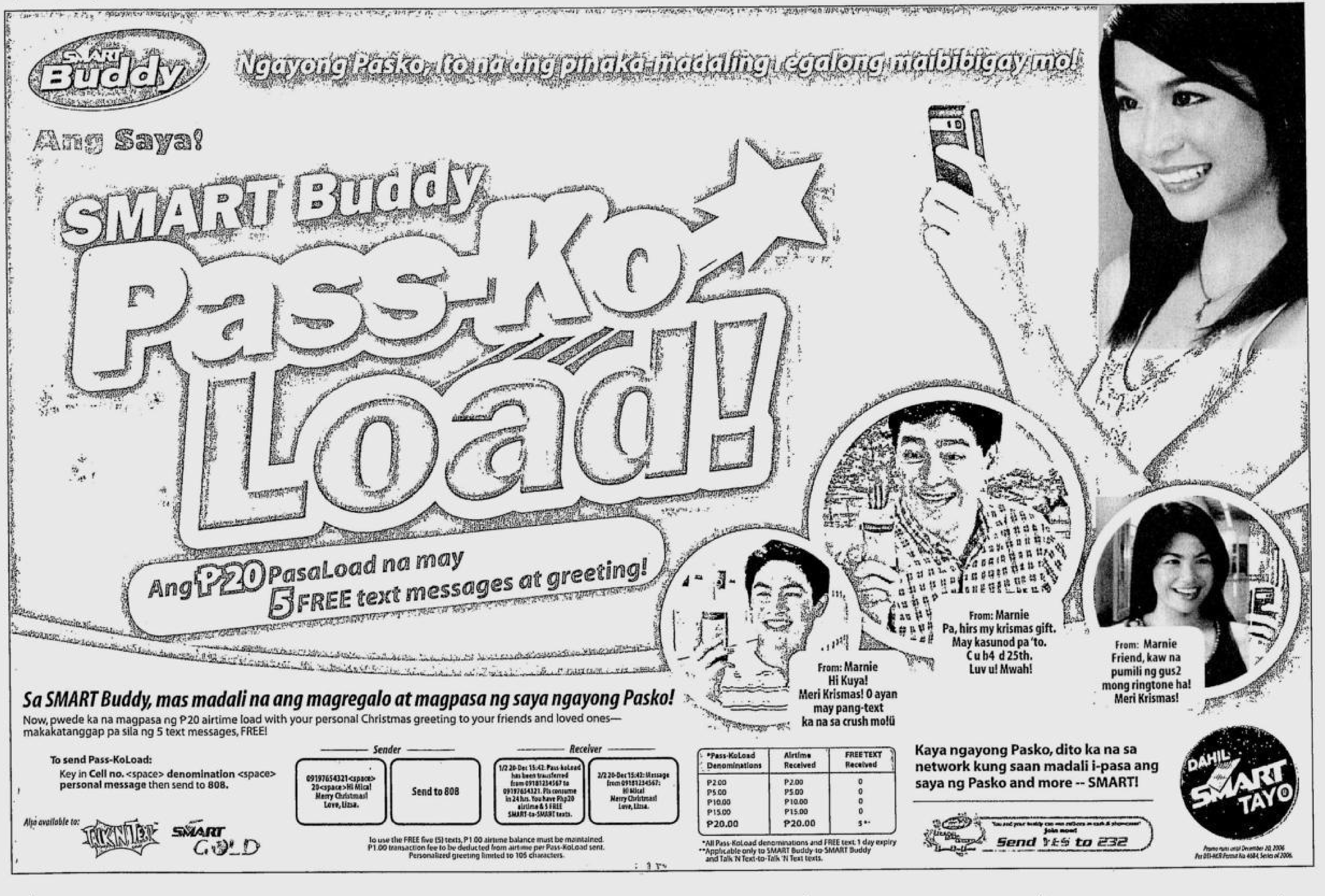
Like Dr. Torres and Janet Ley, many satisfied clients have reported a reduction in age spots, freckles, and other skin discolorations. Most women who lead active and busy lifestyles are happy with the fact that aside from the visible improvement in their skin, they experience relatively no downtime. This means that one can actually have fairer, even-toned, glowing skin after approximately 30 minutes of treatment, and can go to work on the same day.

Now isn't this the best news for your skin?

To know more about IPL Photorejuvenation, just call Facial Care Centre at 892-SKIN. That's 892-7546.

Janet Ley, enjoying her clear, flawless skin.

Another satisfied client, Dr. Ariel Torres.



SMART Buddy

Ngayong Pasko, ito na ang pinaka-madaling regalong maibibigay mo!

Ang Saya!

SMART Buddy Pass-Ko Load!

Ang P20 PasaLoad na may 5 FREE text messages at greeting!

From: Marnie
Hi Kuya!
Meri Krismas! O ayan
may pang-text
ka na sa crush mo!ü

From: Marnie
Pa, hirs my krismas gift.
May kasunod pa 'to.
C u b4 d 25th.
Luv u! Mwah!

From: Marnie
Friend, kaw na
pumili ng gus2
mong ringtone ha!
Meri Krismas!

Sa SMART Buddy, mas madali na ang magregalo at magpasa ng saya ngayong Pasko!

Now, pwede ka na magpasa ng P20 airtime load with your personal Christmas greeting to your friends and loved ones—makakatanggap pa sila ng 5 text messages, FREE!

To send Pass-KoLoad:
Key in Cell no. <space> denomination <space> personal message then send to 808.

Sender
09197654321<space>20<space>Hi Mical Merry Christmas! Love, Liza.
Send to 808

Receiver
1/2 20-Dec 15:42: Pass-koLoad has been transferred from 09181234567 to 09197654321. Pls consume in 24 hrs. You have Php20 airtime & 5 FREE SMART-to-SMART texts.
2/2 20-Dec 15:42: Message from 09181234567: Hi Mical Merry Christmas! Love, Liza.

To use the FREE five (5) texts, P1.00 airtime balance must be maintained.
P1.00 transaction fee to be deducted from airtime per Pass-KoLoad sent.
Personalized greeting limited to 105 characters.

Also available to: TALK 'N TEXT SMART GOLD

*Pass-KoLoad Denominations	Airtime Received	FREE TEXT Received
P2.00	P2.00	0
P5.00	P5.00	0
P10.00	P10.00	0
P15.00	P15.00	0
P20.00	P20.00	5**

*All Pass-KoLoad denominations and FREE text: 1 day expiry
**Applicable only to SMART Buddy-to-SMART Buddy and Talk 'N Text-to-Talk 'N Text texts.

Kaya ngayong Pasko, dito ka na sa network kung saan madali i-pasa ang saya ng Pasko and more -- SMART!

Send YES to 232

DAHIL SMART TAYO

Promo runs until December 20, 2006
Per DTI-NCR Permit No. 4684, Series of 2006.

CHEER FACTOR

LOS ANGELES—Actor George Clooney's beloved potbelly pig Max has died. He was 19.

Max, who lived at Clooney's Hollywood Hills home, died "peacefully" of natural causes on Friday, Clooney's publicist, Stan Rosenfield, said by phone Monday.

"Max, like any pet, became a member of the family," Rosenfield said. "He was a big pig, as pigs go. I can't tell you how much he weighed."

The Oscar-winning actor, 45, who owned the pig for 18 years, reportedly once said the porker was his longest relationship. *AP*

MMTA
METRO MANILA THEATERS ASSOCIATION
MOVIE GUIDE
NOW SHOWING

SHANG CINEPLEX
6th floor Shangri-la Plaza EDSA corner Shaw Boulevard, Mandaluyong City
Telephone: 633 2227 / 633 7851 loc. 171
1 (DOLBY) A GOOD YEAR
2 (DOLBY) THE NATIVITY
3 (DOLBY) HAPPY FEET
4 (DOLBY) CASINO ROYALE
PREMIERE
(DOLBY) RIDING ALONE / KINKY BOOTS

CINEMA 2000
Cinema 2000 Waltermart Makati
Waltermart Center, Chino Roces Ave. cor. Antonio Arnaiz Pio del Pilar, Makati City
Tel 816.4214 / 816.4216
CASINO ROYAL 007 JAMES BOND
2 HAPPY FEET
3 THE NATIVITY STORY
4 A GOOD YEAR

starmall EDSA SHAW
(Mandaluyong) tel. 7266150
3 THE NATIVITY STORY
4 (DOLBY DIGITAL EX) THE RETURN
5 RESERVED

metropolis star cinema
www.clickthecity.com.ph
(ALABANG) tel. 8504285, 6433594
1 KAMASUTRA - 3
2 REYNA
3 ZU WARRIOR
4 HUWAG KANG LILINGON

THEATRES
Cabanatuan
CASINO ROYAL 007 JAMES BOND
2 PITONG DALAGITA
3 THE MARINE

PACIFIC MALL LUCENA CINEMAGIC
Pacific Mall Lucena Tel (042) 660-5271
1 GIGIL
2 PITONG DALAGITA
3 RESRVED
4 RESRVED

Filinvest FESTIVAL CINEMA
(Muntinlupa) tel 850.3571 or 72
1 THE RETURN
CASINO ROYAL 007 JAMES BOND
3 BORAT
4 HAPPY FEET
5 THE NATIVITY STORY
6 A GOOD YEAR
7 INANG YAYA
8 REYNA
9 KAMASUTRA - 3
10 HUWAG KANG LILINGON

Blue Wave MARQUINTON
Sumulong Highway cor. Mayor Gil Fernando Street, Sta. Niño, Marikina City tel. 9341927
1 (DOLBY) A GOOD YEAR
2 (DOLBY) REYNA
3 (DOLBY) HAPPY FEET
4 (DOLBY) RESERVED

SUPER CINERAMA
Isetann Cinerama Complex Recto tel 7334228
CASINO ROYAL 007 JAMES BOND
2 A GOOD YEAR
3 REYNA
4 NATIVITY STORY
5 HUWAG KANG LILINGON

THE MARKETPLACE
Mandaluyong
tel 533.3851 / 533.3856
1 INANG YAYA
2 THE COVENANT
3 PITONG DALAGITA
4 ANG PAMANA

Maragana CINEMA
(Pasay) tel 833.3290 / 833.3274
1 INANG YAYA
2 ZU WARRIOR
3 THE RETURN

Center Mall Cinema
Baguio Center Mall, Magsaysay Avenue (Baguio City) tel (074)- (4449346)
1 BORAT
2 FLAGS OF OUR FATHERS

Jade Cinema
(Angeles City) tel (045) 887.5001 to 03
1 BORAT
2 REYNA
3 INANG YAYA
4 FARGILE

Centre Plaza Cinema
(Balanga, Bataan) tel (047) 237.7007
1 INANG YAYA
CASINO ROYAL 007 JAMES BOND

EASTWOOD CINEMAS
(Eastwood City Walk 2, Eastwood City E. Rodriguez Jr. Ave (C-5) Quezon City) tel 687.6963 or 72
1 (DOLBY) A GOOD YEAR
2 (DOLBY) HAPPY FEET
3 (DOLBY) CASINO ROYAL
4 (DOLBY) THE NATIVITY

CINEMA 2000
Movie Theatres of the New Millenium

Cinema 2000 Waltermart
(Calamba) tel (049) 545.7383
1 REYNA
2 THE MARINE
3 (DOLBY) HAPPY FEET
4 RESERVED

Cinema 2000 Pavilion Mall
(Biñan) tel. (049) 4111146
1 RESERVED
2 (DOLBY) RESERVED
3 HAPPY FEET
4 REYNA

Cinema 2000 Cinemagix
(Urdaneta) tel(075) 568.6771
1 INANG YAYA
2 HUWAG KANG LILINGON
CASINO ROYAL 007 JAMES BOND

Cinema 2000 Metrotown
(Tarlac) tel (045) 982.1729
1 HUWAG KANG LILINGON
2 PITONG DALAGITA
CASINO ROYAL 007 JAMES BOND
4 FLAG OF OUR FATHER

Cinema 2000 Waltermart
(Plaridel) tel (044) 795.3320
1 THE GRUDGE - 2
2 INANG YAYA
3 (DOLBY) FRAGILE / BORAT

Cinema 2000 Waltermart
(Gapan) tel. (044) 4867736
CASINO ROYAL 007 JAMES BOND
2 PITONG DALAGITA

Lianas Cinema
(Pasig) tel 640.4748
1 THE GRUDGE - 2
2 THE COVENANT

Lianas Cinema
(Alabang) tel 850.1276
1 SHAOLIN VS EVIL DEAD - 1
2 TUKSO SI CHARITO
3 PATIKIM NG PINYA
4 KALELDO

Lianas MovieCity
(Calamba) tel (049) 545.7202
1 TEXAS CHAINSAW MASSACRE
2 THE LOVERS
3 THE MARINE
4 REYNA
5 THE GRUDGE - 2

Fiesta World Mall
(Lipa) tel (043) 981.0790
1 FLAG OF OUR FATHERS
2 FEAST
3 BORAT
4 REYNA

Berma Cinema
(Baclaran) tel 879.2030 / 879.2029
1 PITONG DALAGITA
2 PAKAWALANG PUSO

MOVIES / SCHEDULES / PRICES SUBJECT TO CHANGE WITHOUT PRIOR NOTICE

POWER PLANT CINEMA
Rockwell Center, Makati City ☎ Tel. No: 8981440-41
DOLBY DIGITAL SURROUND•EX

HAPPY FEET G 1:10,3:30,5:50,8:10	DECK THE HALLS G 1:45,3:55,6:05,8:15	A GOOD YEAR PG13 12:15,2:45,5:15,7:45,10:15
CASINO ROYALE 007 PG13 1:15,4:10,7:05,10:00	THE RETURN PG13 2:00,4:00 BORAT R18 6:00,8:00	THE NATIVITY STORY PG13 1:35,3:45,5:55,8:05,10:15

MOVIES AND SCREENING SCHEDULES SUBJECT TO CHANGE WITHOUT PRIOR NOTICE: FOR VERIFICATION CALL 898-1440/41
MATINEE PHP 111.00 – SCREENINGS BEFORE 5:00 PM – FREE SEATING – MONDAY-FRIDAY.

PILIPINAS, GAY KA NA BA?
RARAMPA NA ANG PELIKULANG YAYANIG SA INYONG NGALA-NGALA!

KEANNA REEVES PAOLO CONTIS MELANIE MARQUEZ
EUGENE DOMINGO JAYSON GAINZA FRANZEN FAJARDO BOBBY ANDREWS
DIEGO LLORICO IC MENDOZA BELLIE FLORES
& EDDIE GARCIA

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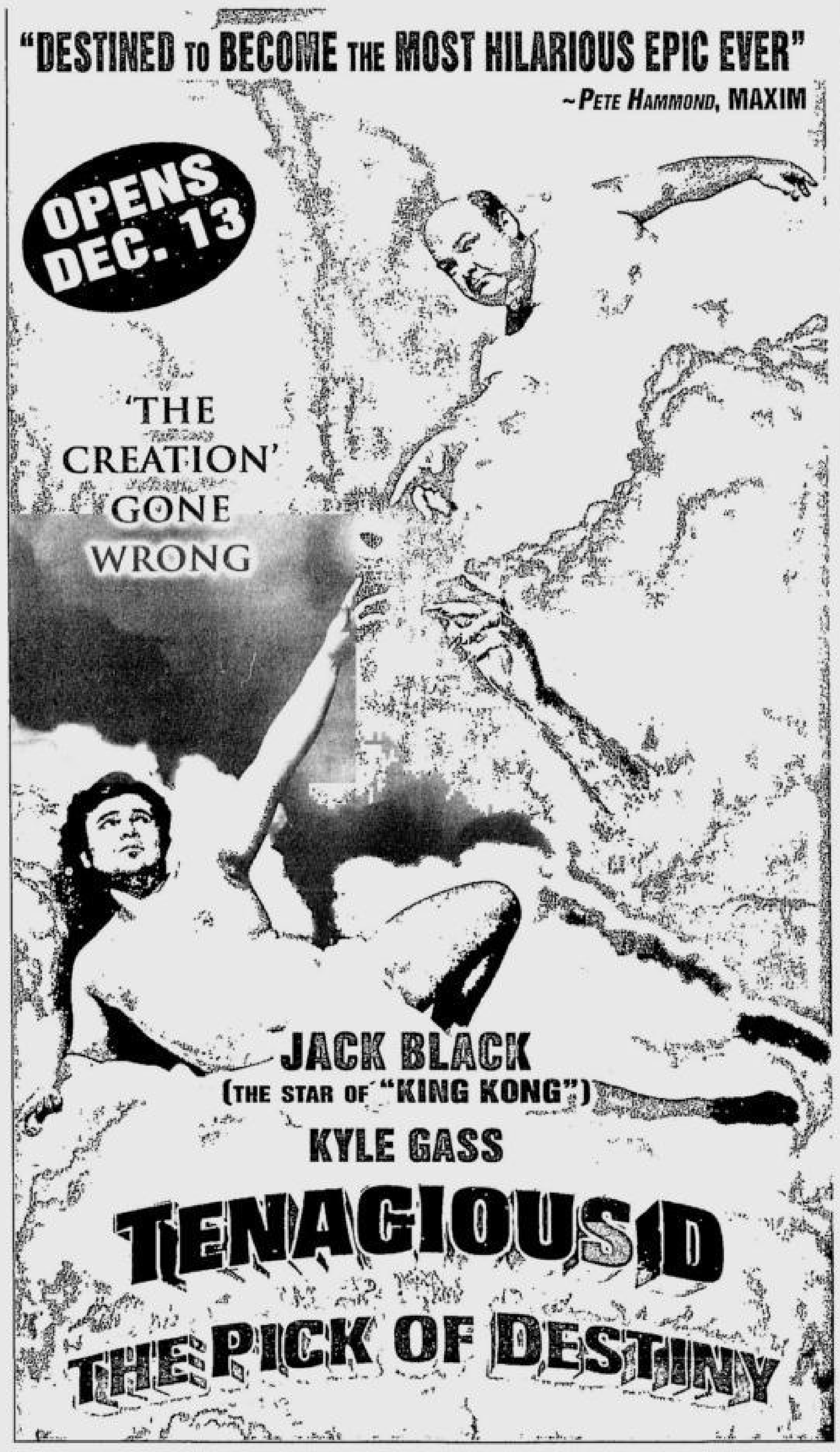
VIVA


"DESTINED TO BECOME THE MOST HILARIOUS EPIC EVER"
~PETE HAMMOND, MAXIM
OPENS DEC. 13
'THE CREATION' GONE WRONG
JACK BLACK
(THE STAR OF "KING KONG")
KYLE GASS
TENACIOUS D
THE PICK OF DESTINY

EASTWOOD CINEMAS
DOLBY DIGITAL SURROUND-EX
Eastwood City Walk 2, Eastwood City
E. Rodriguez Jr. Ave. (C-5) Quezon City
For inquiries, call:
687-6963
GUARANTEED SEATS
MOVIES ARE SUBJECT TO CHANGE WITHOUT PRIOR NOTICE

1	A GOOD YEAR	2:55, 5:40, 8:25, 11:00	PG-13
2	HAPPY FEET	1:05, 3:35, 6:05, 8:35, 11:00	G
3	CASINO ROYAL	1:10, 4:20, 7:30, 10:40	PG-13
4	THE NATIVITY	1:20, 3:45, 6:10, 8:35, 11:00	G

SHANG CINEPLEX
① A GOOD YEAR
MTRCB PG-13
1 45, 4:30, 7:15, 10.00
③ HAPPY FEET
MTRCB GP
12 05, 2 30, 5.00, 7:30, 10:00
② THE NATIVITY
MTRCB. GP
12 20 2 45 5:10 7:35 10:00
④ CASINO ROYALE
MTRCB PG-13
12.55, 4 00 7 05 10 10
PREMIERE THEATRE
RIDING ALONE / KINKY BOOTS
MTRCB GP 1 20 5 40
MTRCB PG-13 3 40 8 00 10 00
Movies and schedules are subject to change without prior notice
Catch the Cineplex Special
From the master director Yimou Zhang comes a quiet and haunting story, filled with stunning images from the hidden heart of China:
"RIDING ALONE FOR THOUSANDS OF MILES"
EXCLUSIVELY showing at the Shang Cineplex starting Nov. 29, 2006
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6th floor, Shangri-La Plaza Mall
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CINEMA 1 DECK THE HALLS
11:35 , 1:40 , 3:45
5:50 , 7:55 , 10:00
PG-13
CINEMA 2 CASINO ROYALE
12:10 , 3:20 , 6:30
9:40
PG-13
DOLBY DIGITAL SURROUND•EX
PROMENADE GREENHILLS
...a dinotertainment for all!
NOW SHOWING
CINEMA 3 A GOOD YEAR
12:35 , 3:05 , 5:35
8:05 , 10:35
PG-13
CINEMA 4 HAPPY FEET
11:00 , 1:15 , 3:35
5:55 , 8:15 , 10:35
GP
CINEMA 5 THE NATIVITY STORY
11:00 , 1:20 , 3:40
6:00 , 8:20 , 10:35
GP
TICKET PRICES & SCREENING TIME SUBJECT TO CHANGE WITHOUT PRIOR NOTICE. FOR CINEMA INQUIRIES, CALL: 722 4496.

MUSIC MUSEUM

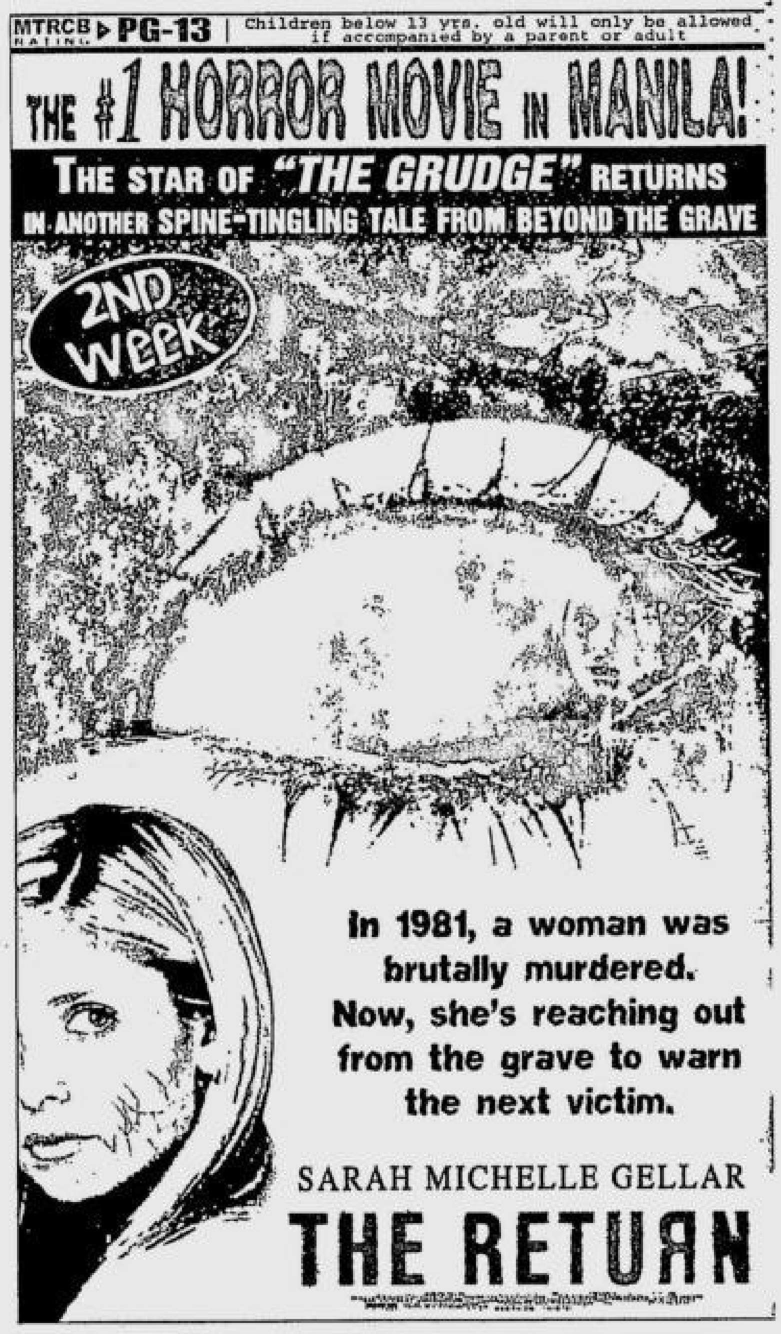
DEC 07 , 2006	NINA	9:00 PM
DEC 08 , 2006	The Good Body " The Repeat "	9:00 PM

TEATRINO
PROMENADE GREENHILLS

EVERY MONDAY	DANCE NIGHT	7:00PM
DEC. 12 , 2006	DYORDS KO PO	8:30 PM
DEC 6 & 13 , 2006	CERRUDO . CLASSICO	8:00 PM
	FOR INQUIRIES PLS CALL 722-4532 LOC.116	

FOR INQUIRIES & RESERVATION, PLS. CALL : 721-6726 OR 721-0635

MTRCB RATING ▶ PG-13 | Children below 13 yrs. old will only be allowed if accompanied by a parent or adult


THE #1 HORROR MOVIE IN MANILA!
THE STAR OF "THE GRUDGE" RETURNS
IN ANOTHER SPINE-TINGLING TALE FROM BEYOND THE GRAVE
2ND WEEK
In 1981, a woman was brutally murdered. Now, she's reaching out from the grave to warn the next victim.
SARAH MICHELLE GELLAR
THE RETURN

DID YOU KNOW...

NEW YORK—A Texas bookstore owner bought a rare page of working lyrics for Beatle Paul McCartney's song "Maxwell's Silver Hammer" for $192,000 at an auction of rock and pop memorabilia at Christie's on Monday.

Bill Butler also won the bidding for one of rock legend Jimi Hendrix's electric guitars—a 1968 Fender Stratocaster—for $168,000, the guitar's strap for $10,800 and a photograph of Hendrix and band members Noel Redding and Mitch Mitchell framed by two topless blondes for $5,400. *Reuters*

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THE ONLY CINEPLEX IN THE COUNTRY — Gateway CINEPLEX*10 — DOLBY DIGITAL-EX

THE NATIVITY 12:10 / 2:30 / 4:50 / 7:10 / 9:30	A GOOD YEAR 1:50 / 4:20 / 6:50 / 9:20	ALL THE KING'S MEN 1:40 / 4:20 / 7:00 / 9:40	
INANG YAYA 1:00 / 3:10 / 5:20 / 7:30 / 9:40	DECK THE HALLS 5:00 / 9:30 THE RETURN 1:00 / 3:00 / 7:00	HAPPY FEET 12:10 / 2:30 / 4:50 / 7:10 / 9:30	
KAMASUTRA 3 12:50 / 3:05 / 5:20 / 7:35 / 9:50	CASINO ROYALE 1:20 / 4:10 / 7:00 / 9:50	REYNA 12:50 / 3:00 / 5:10 / 7:20 / 9:30	ALL THE KING'S MEN 1:00 / 3:40 / 6:20 / 9:00

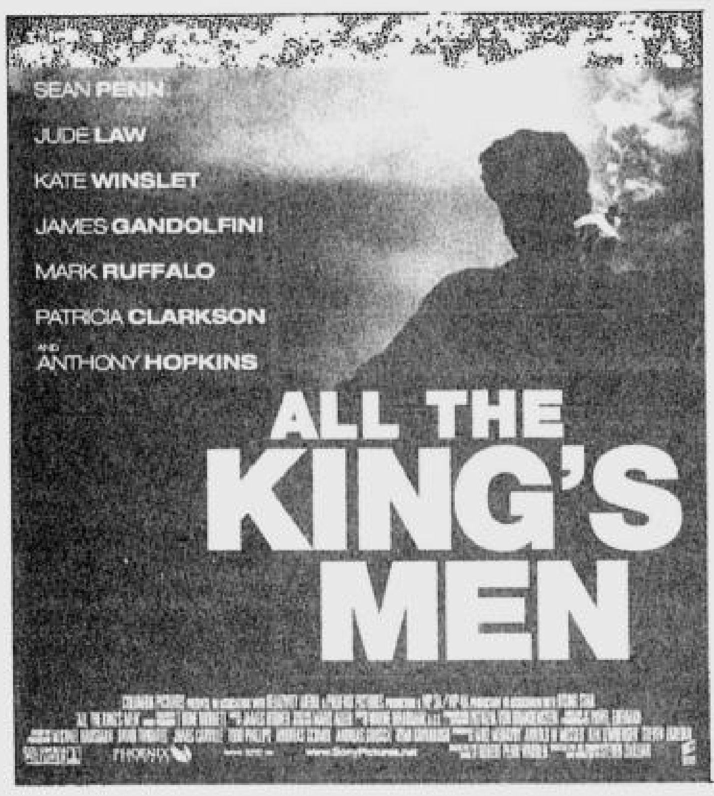
ALIMALL 5

INANG YAYA 11:55 / 2:05 / 4:15 / 6:25 / 8:35	CASINO ROYALE 12:00 / 2:50 / 5:40 / 8:30	THE NATIVITY 1:05 / 3:25 / 5:45 / 8:05
REYNA 11:45 / 1:55 / 4:05 / 6:15 / 8:25	KAMASUTRA 3 12:05 R3 / 1:40 / 3:55 / 6:10 / 8:25	DOLBY DIGITAL dts SDDS

For ticket inquiries, please call TicketNet at 911-5555 or log on to www.ticketnet.com.ph

ARANETA COLISEUM

PHILIPPINE IDOL	PBA PHILIPPINE CUP
December 9, Sat. & December 10, Sun. 7:30 pm	Dec. 13, Wed. - 4:35 WELCOAT vs SAN MIGUEL / 7:20 COCA COLA vs PUREFOODS



"ALL THE KING'S MEN IS A MASTERPIECE. SEAN PENN GIVES THE PERFORMANCE OF A LIFETIME. A MAGNIFICENT CAST. WORDS ESCAPE ME."
- LARRY KING

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AT

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gatewaycineplex10.com

MTRCB Rating: PG-13

NOW ON ITS 2ND WEEK!

A feel-good story filled with positive values... A must-see family movie for the Holidays!

Ang oras, nahahati. Ang puso, hindi.

Maricel Soriano bilang

Inang Yaya

INANG YAYA
A UNICO ENTERTAINMENT RELEASE of A UNITEL PICTURES PRODUCTION
Also Starring SUNSHINE CRUZ ZOREN LEGASPI LIZA LORENA
Introducing ERIKA ORETA TALA SANTOS

Handog ng ALASKA
ALASKA MILK CORPORATION
Official Radio Station YES! FM 101.1
MTRCB Rating G General Patronage ALL AGES ADMITTED

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AT THE CINEMAS

Reserve your tickets by texting SURESEATS GB3 or SURESEATS G4 to 2333 (Globe) or 211 (Smart) or log on to www.sureseats.com for web reservations.
Movie schedules may change without prior notice. For verification please call 729 7777

THX

G1 GLORIETTA 1	1 REYNA	2 THE NATIVITY	3 HAPPY FEET	4 INANG YAYA			
G4 GLORIETTA 4	1 HAPPY FEET	2 ALL THE KING'S MEN	3 THX A GOOD YEAR GUARANTEED SEATS	4 BORAT	5 THE RETURN	6 THE NATIVITY	7 CASINO ROYALE
GB1 GREENBELT 1	1 HAPPY FEET	2 THE NATIVITY					
GB3 GREENBELT 3	1 THX HAPPY FEET GUARANTEED SEATS	2 THX THE NATIVITY GUARANTEED SEATS	3 ALL THE KING'S MEN GUARANTEED SEATS	4 A GOOD YEAR GUARANTEED SEATS	5 CASINO ROYALE GUARANTEED SEATS		
ATC ALABANG TOWN CENTER	1 THX THE NATIVITY GUARANTEED SEATS	2 A GOOD YEAR	3 HAPPY FEET	4 DECK THE HALLS	5 CASINO ROYALE		
ACC AYALA CENTER CEBU	1 THE NATIVITY	2 HAPPY FEET	3 THE MARINE	4 REYNA			
M2 MARKET! MARKET!	1 REYNA	2 THE NATIVITY	3 A GOOD YEAR	4 HAPPY FEET	5 INANG YAYA		

At the Activity Center

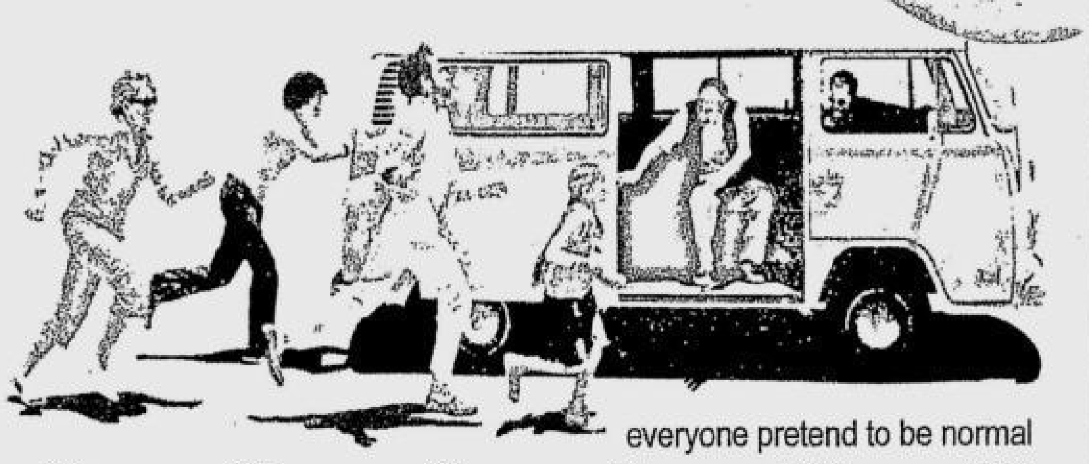
Customer Service text hotline: 0917 6095900
Customer Service Numbers: Glorietta - 752 7272; from 10am to 9pm
Greenbelt - 757 4853; from 11am to 9pm
Alabang Town Center - 842 2782; from 10am to 8pm
Ayala Center Cebu - (032) 231 5342 loc 324
Market! Market! - 886 7519

GLORIETTA	ALABANG TOWN CENTER
Dora's Sing-Along Fiesta Live Show December 8 to 10, 2006	Anson Exhibit December 11 to 22, 2006
AYALA CENTER CEBU	MARKET! MARKET!
Ballet Center December 9, 2006	Christmas Goodies Bazaar December 11 to 15, 2006

GREENBELT	Holiday Harmonies with the Philippine Madrigal Singers December 2, 9 & 23, 2006
Greenbelt Onstage	Repertory Philippines presents SOUND OF MUSIC at REP's Globe Theater -- November 11 to December 17, 2006 For inquiries, pls. call 887-0710
Ayala MUSEUM	Watch RILES: LIFE ON THE TRACKS. A documentary by acclaimed Filipino director Ditsi Carolino December 15, 2006 / 5:00 PM - 7:00 PM

OPENS DECEMBER 13 EXCLUSIVELY AT GLORIETTA 4 & GREENBELT 3 CINEMAS

Ayala Malls CINEMAS



everyone pretend to be normal

GREG KINNEAR · STEVE CARELL · TONI COLLETTE · PAUL DANO · with ABIGAIL BRESLIN · and ALAN ARKIN

LITTLE MISS SUNSHINE

www.foxsearchlight.com/LittleMissSunshine

OFFICIAL SELECTION SUNDANCE FILM FESTIVAL

MTRCB Rating: Restricted 13

20th Century Fox · glorietta · GREENBELT

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For a single or accumulated same-day purchase of P3,000, pick a prize and win instantly!

PLUS! FREE P500 Ayala Malls GC!
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Promo Period: November 15, 2006 to January 31, 2007

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See flyers for details
Per DTI-NCR Permit No. 4530, Series of 2006

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Fed up with Pacquiao's agents

DOLLY WOOD

Dolly Anne Carvajal

MY AD AGENCY SOURCES TOLD me some of their clients are not too keen about getting **Manny Pacquiao** to endorse their products anymore. They're fed up dealing with his throngs of agents.

"*Ang gulo kausap kasi sobrang daming ahente na nakapaligid kay* Manny. *May nag-*yes *na sa 'yo yun pala yung isa pang* agent *ni* Manny *naka-*commit *na sa iba.* Conflict! They all want a piece of him. His lifestyle is too flighty. His *pagsasabong* won't do him any good in the long run. *Parang wala nang katapusan pagdating ng pera sa kaniya. Sana* the people around him have his best interest at heart."

A case of cordon sanitaire scare? Are they really in Pacman's "corner" or not?

Birthday bash

I had a blast at the joint birthday bash of **Pops Fernandez** and **Anton San Diego** (Philippine Tattler editor) in Conways Shangri-la. It was an '80s party. I enjoyed dancing the night away. The music brought back so many memories of how my friendship with Pipay (and our other friends like **Arlene Muhlach** and **Nadia Montenegro** who were also around) started during the disco decade.

Just like the '80s swing which Pipay and I still know by heart even without much practice, our friendship is something we will never outgrow. Feels good to be stuck with each other and be back on our fave time warp whenever we're together. It's like we have a bubble where we can retreat to when the world gets too cruel.

Those were my sentiments exactly seeing all those old familiar faces at Pipay and Anton's party. It was no occasion for prying show biz questions. But if a picture could paint a thousand words, then let the shot here say the rest.

No karma

After all the controversies she has been embroiled in, **Gretchen Barretto** has no worries that she will live up to the title of her comeback vehicle, Canary Films' "Matakot Ka Sa Karma."

"I have paid my debts dearly in the past. I've learned my lessons well. Only the opinion of the ones I love matter now," Greta declares.

Her co-stars are **Angelica Panganiban** and **Rica Peralejo**. They all portray strong-willed women thrust unknowingly in different yet similar circumstances where the present inherits the past in the horror trilogy.

Is she out to break the record of her estranged sister Claudine whose horror flick "Sukob" raked in millions? "I'm not back in the scene to compete. I have no illusions of being a great actress. I just love to act."

And people love to react to everything La Greta wears, says and does.

New endorser

As Bobson's celebrity endorser, **Rhian Ramos** gets dolled up with its dreamy holiday collection. It's either Victorian Era glam or Oriental charm. Along with her outfits, she always wears a smile brought about by her newfound fame.

"I consider my show biz career as my new school. I'm lucky that my friends from my real school don't treat me differently even I'm in show biz *na*. They keep me grounded."

Young stars should take the cue from this Bobson girl to stay reachable even when they are already way up there in the billboards.

New kiddie VCD

Star Records brings Christmas cheer to kids via "My 1st Lessons with Jollibee Series 2." It features exciting lessons with "Going Bulilit" stars Nash, Sharlene, Nikki, John and Jollibee himself. So our fave fast food mascot serves "brain food," too, huh? Check it out in video shops nationwide.

POPS Fernandez, Regine Velasquez, Ogie Alcasid and Jomari Yllana

FYI (For Your Indulgence)

- **Robin Padilla** fondly calls **Angel Locsin** "Hija." She calls him "Kuya." Her other pet name for BF **Oyo Boy Sotto** (aside from Baby) is "Bo" (short for Kalbo). Oyo's term of endearment for her is "Lot" (short for Kulot). Fame and name game.
- **Christian Bautista** says he and GF **Rachel Ann Go** have no professional rivalry. "I think she sings better than I do. As the guy, I want to make her shine always. It's no issue between us who has more shows or who sells more records."

But who loves the other more? He blushes. "Secret!" Love's mysteries are better left sealed.

Personal

Thanks a mil to **Catherine Ilacad** and the efficient staff of Posh Nails (Tomas Morato) for the "royal" treatment.

Happy birthday to my sweetest cuz **Tricia Jimenez**. I love you more each Dec 7th of your life.

E-mail wateringholeshangri-la@yahoo.com

UP DHARMA Down's Armi Millare is Best Female Rock Icon. PHOTOS BY RODEL ROTONI

DONG ABAY gets some love from the audience.

Roars of approval . . .

From page E1

looked well-adjusted to the direction he's taken as leader of the band Pupil. Appearing onstage in a bullet-proof vest, Buendia was visibly happy as he swayed while playing rhythm guitar and singing lead vocals on "Nasaan Ka Na."

Even more obvious was Raimund Marasigan having the time of his life as a key member of two bands and much sought-after record producer—usually in tandem with Buddy Zabala, who is likewise a noticeable presence these days as the new bassist of the Dawn. Marasigan's newfound role as vocalist of Sandwich, keyboardist of Pedicab and co-producer of albums by the Itchyworms and Dong Abay, among others, is an example of a musician's generosity in sharing talent whose rewards were felt that night. Marasigan and Zabala picked up the Producer of the Year Award for Itchyworms' "Noontime Show" album.

Yano, too, has long been defunct, but its former vocalist seems to have recovered from the trauma of wrong career moves and legal problems. Dong Abay, now fronting his own band, remains a crowd favorite and was eagerly anticipated to upstage everyone. However, the superlative introduction by Imago's Aia de Leon fell flat as Abay, strutting in a G-string and sporting a long beard, sang in a hoarse voice that made the staccato lyrics of "Bombardment" more difficult to deliver.

This is also a year that saw a veteran band like the Dawn back with a new album, coinciding with the release of a semi-autobiographical movie that earned raves in a recent digital film festival.

Noteworthy is the popularity of new bands Urbandub and Up Dharma Down, whose leaders, Gabby Alipe and Armi Millare, took home the Vocalist of the Year and Best Female Rock Icon awards, respectively.

It should likewise merit attention that, alongside Marasigan, two of the winners, Myrene Academia (Bassist of the Year) and Mong Alcaraz (Best Male Rock Icon) are actually band mates in several different groups. How they maintain this balancing act is praiseworthy.

But the night belonged to Kamikazee, which won Best Live Act, Song of the Year ("Narda") and Artist of the Year Awards. The ruckus the band creates each time it performs could be attributed to the hell-raising stance of vocalist Jay Contreras, as well as the sarcastic humor and working-class sentiments of its songs—which in one way or another have a connection with the music of Parokya Ni Edgar and Yano.

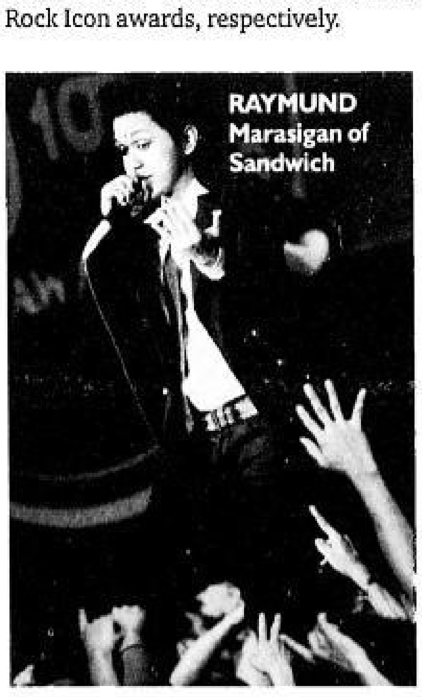
The NU Rock Awards is 13 years old and should go on forever—if only because it's greatly responsible for the fame, fortune and influence of the best young bands in the country then and now.

JETT PANGAN of Dawn

THE WINNERS

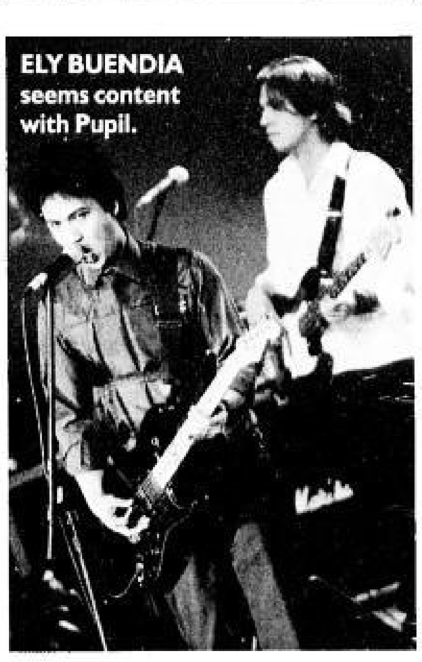
Best New Artist—Up Dharma Down
Drummer of the Year—Jazz Nicolas of Itchyworms
Bassist of the Year—Myrene Academia of Sandwich/Imago
Guitarist of the Year—Mong Alcaraz of Sandwich/Chicosci
Vocalist of the Year—Gabby Alipe of Urbandub
Producer of the Year—Raimund Marasigan, Buddy Zabala for "Noontime Show"
Best Album Packaging—"5 on the Floor" by Sandwich
Best Music Video—"Sugod" (Sandwich) directed by Marie Jamora
Rising Sun Award—Itchyworms
Best Live Act—Kamikazee
In the Raw Award—Silent Sanctuary
Best Male Rock Icon—Mong Alcaraz of Sandwich/Chicocsci
Best Female Rock Icon—Armi Millare of Up Dharma Down
Hall of Fame Award—DJs of the Rock of Manila (DZRJ)
Song of the Year—"Narda" (Kamikazee)
Artist of the Year—Kamikazee

KAMIKAZEE is this year's champ.



RAYMUND Marasigan of Sandwich

ITCHYWORMS got the Rising Sun Award



ELY BUENDIA seems content with Pupil.

Blige leads Billboard winners

MARY J. took home nine trophies. AP

LOS ANGELES—R&B SINGER MARY J. Blige was the top winner at the Billboard Music Awards in Las Vegas on Monday (Tuesday in Manila), taking home nine prizes, while "American Idol" champion Carrie Underwood was honored for Album of the Year.

Underwood won five awards, as did rapper T.I. Four acts won three awards each: R&B singers Chris Brown and Rihanna and rock bands Nickelback and the Fray.

Brown, 17, who topped the charts with his first single "Run It," took the top prize for Artist of the Year.

"This is crazy," Brown said, as he accepted at MGM Grand Garden Arena. "I'm gonna keep doing it if y'all keep supporting me."

The event honors the top acts on the Billboard charts, as determined by radio airplay, digital downloads and retail sales.

It was televised on Fox, whose censors were kept busy blocking naughty words from hitting the airwaves following a government crackdown. Black Eyed Peas singer Fergie's performance of her new solo tune "Fergalicious" was hit by a time delay three times and comedian Howie Mandel was censored when he appeared to be complimenting resurgent rapper Flavor Flav on the size of his genitals.

FOUR awards for Carrie Underwood. AP

Blige's haul included R&B/Hip-Hop Artist and Female R&B/Hip-Hop Artist. Her chart-topping album "The Breakthrough" earned her the awards for R&B Album and R&B/Hip-Hop Album. Her single "Be Without You" delivered the awards for Hot 100 Airplay Song, R&B/Hip-Hop Song, R&B/Hip-Hop Song Airplay, and Videoclip. Blige also was named R&B/Hip-Hop Song Artist.

In addition to winning the album and country album prizes for "Some Hearts," Underwood was named Top Female Billboard 200 Album Artist, Female Country Artist and New Country Artist. Kenny Chesney was Male Country Artist of the Year.

TONY Bennett enjoys a good laugh with Stevie Wonder AP

Rapper T.I. was named Best Rap Artist, Rap Album Artist, Rap Song artist and Videoclip Artist. His album "King" took the Rap Album prize.

Tony Bennett received the Century Award for lifetime achievement. "I've been singing for 60 years," said the newly minted octogenarian. "The way you're treating me tonight, I wanna sing for another 60 years." *Reuters*

Jolly pre-Christmas viewing treat

VIEWFINDER

Nestor U. Torre

"DECK THE HALLS" IS A JOLLY PRE-CHRISTMAS treat. Set in a conservative town, it shows what happens when a recognition-starved salesman gets on the wrong side of the neighborhood's "Mr. Christmas" by putting up the gaudiest Yuletide decorations possible.

The combatants are played by **Danny DeVito** and **Matthew Broderick**, respectively. As the salesman, DeVito is a bundle of doubts and fears, while Broderick plays it buttoned-down cool.

One would think that, being cast as the more volatile character, DeVito would run away with the movie, but the opposite turns out to be the case.

DeVito was cute as a cantankerous tarsier some years ago, but he's older now and he comes across as more cantankerous than cute.

For his part, Broderick hams it up sparingly, and his light touch is easier to take than his co-star's relentless comic energy.

Why does DeVito's character go overboard in gussying up his house with tons of Christmas decor? He confesses that he's achieved little in his life, so he's going whole hog this Christmas so that his house can be seen from outer space! Is that such a big deal? To him, it is.

So, he goes crazy making his house look like a Yuletide theme park, and drive his family over the brink as well.

As for Broderick, he's shocked to see his quiet neighborhood suddenly transformed into a raucous, garish tourist sight, and he decides to fight back.

This battle between opposites is the movie's main comedic engine, and it pushes the film's plot up to giddy heights.

To be sure, the way the story's central problem is solved is more fantastic than believable, but the production is otherwise so engaging that it survives its plotting and resolution woes.

Viewers here should be able to relate to this movie, because over-the-top Christmas décor is popular in these parts.

We aren't talking only about the Policarpio St. syndrome, but also about a number of hoity-toity villages where neighbors try to upstage one another by over-decorating their homes—to a fault!

"Deck the Halls" has its share of unproductive detours and low points, but it remains a viewing treat and leaves viewers feeling good—the right frame of mind and heart to be in as we smilingly slide into this year's Christmas month. Joy to the world!

'Mga Pusang Gala'

Top prize first feature winner at the San Francisco LGBT (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender) Film Festival and declared one of the best three films of 2005 by the Pampelikulang Samahan ng mga Dalubguro, **Ellen Ongkeko-Marfil**'s "Mga Pusang Gala" is now out on video, uncut and with additional footage. It is available in most video stores nationwide.

For worldwide distribution by Ariztical Entertainment, the film is doing well at festivals abroad (Fribourg, New York, Chicago, Dallas, Quebec, Montreal, Melbourne). Also produced by Ongkeko-Marfil, it is based on **Jun Lana**'s play, screenplay together with **Rody Vera**. It stars **Ricky Davao**, **Irma Adlawan**, **Reggie Curley**, **Lauren Novero** and **Alchris Galura**, and tells the story of female and gay bonding in search of true love.

ROUNDUP

Thriller

"Sa Ilalim ng Cogon," a mystery thriller, won the Best International Feature at last year's Buenos Aires Rojo Sangre Fantasy Film Festival in Argentina.

The movie tells the story of former soldier Sam (Yul Servo) who, in search of his missing former wife, gets embroiled in a violent heist that climaxes in a deadly double-cross.

He finds himself hiding in a creepy, run-down mansion, where he finds Katia (Julia Clarete) swimming naked in the mansion's abandoned pool. They begin a torrid affair.

The film opens Dec. 13 exclusively at Robinsons Galleria Indiesine Cinema 8. Tickets are at P100.

Table for 3

Star World's "Table for Three" is about two brothers who fight for the love of Andrea Zavatti, daughter of the owner of a restaurant where the Thomas brothers are employed.

The cast is led by Nate Haden, Zack Silva, Michelle Belegrin, Vivian Gray, Fiona Hunter, Greg Strouse and Chuti Tiu.

Archive

BERLIN—US director Steven Spielberg's Shoah Foundation on Monday granted a German university access to a massive archive of some 52,000 video interviews with Holocaust survivors.

In the first of its kind outside the US, students and professors at Berlin's Free University will be able to view the testimonies in 32 languages with people from 56 countries.

Douglas Greenberg, director of the Shoah Foundation Institute for Visual History and Education at the University of Southern California, said one of the organization's most important goals was to provide access to the archive to as broad an audience as possible. *AFP*

'Cleopatra'

LOS ANGELES—A major US film studio is considering tackling "Cleopatra" anew, more than 40 years after Joseph Mankiewicz's opus went down in history as one of the most expensive Hollywood films of all time, the entertainment industry daily Variety reported Friday.

Columbia Pictures, a Sony subsidiary, has bought the rights to the film version of author Stacy Schiff's book on the life of the Egyptian queen, according to Variety. Schiff won the prestigious Pulitzer Prize in 2000 for her biography "Vera," about the wife of Russian-American author Vladimir Nabokov. *AFP*

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Meet Nick Naylor, the chief spokesman of the Academy for Tobacco Studies, whose job is to be in favor to smokers and cigarette makers. Usually confronted by conservative lawmakers (who legislates on putting poison labels on every pack), Naylor resets the agenda by devising ways to shut up cancer patients to speak against smoking and by enlisting an A-List Hollywood director to make smoking "cool" in movies. But at the end of the day, the curiosity of his son about his job makes Naylor think another perspective for their future.

WARNING: Watching this movie is not dangerous to your health.

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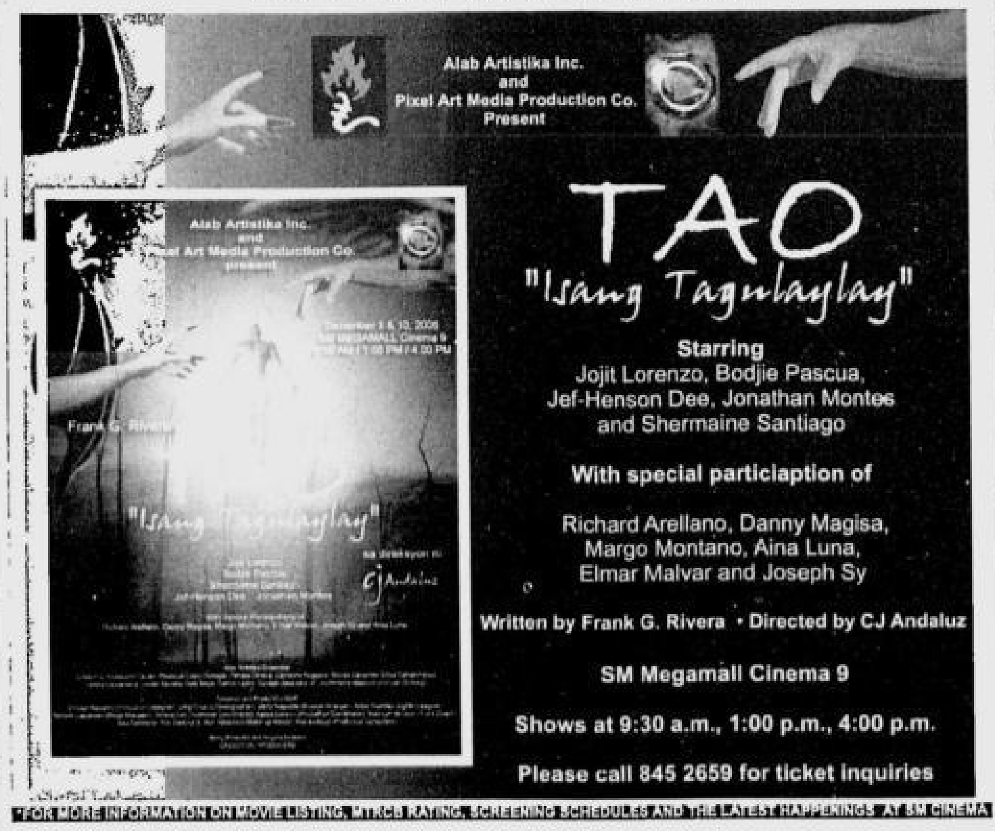

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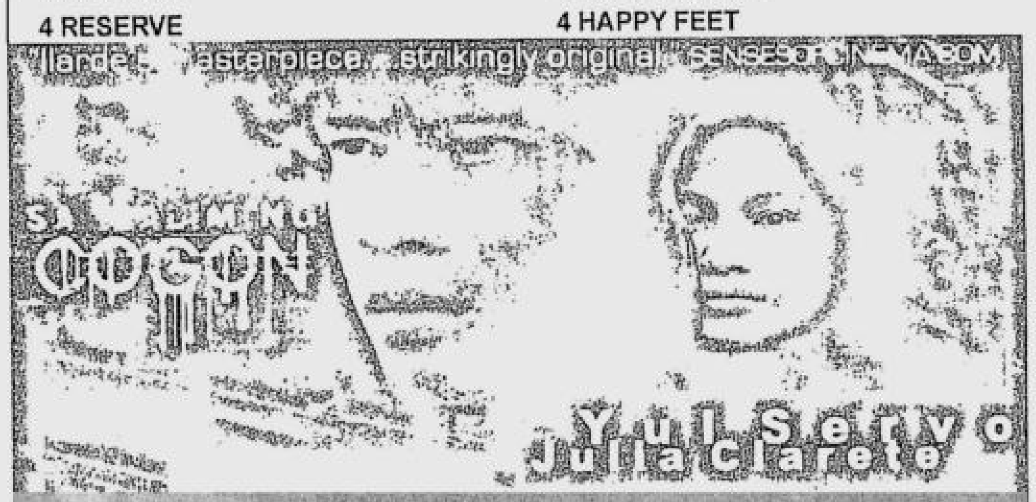

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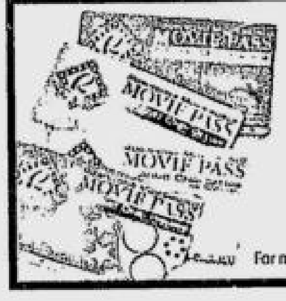

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A Jumbo Jello Tutti Frutti moment

By Kathryn L. Reyes

WATCHING TWO DOLPHINS frolic in a clear blue pool on a bright Monday morning, our first instinct was to dive right in—except that the pool was 10 feet deep.

This wasn't in Hong Kong's Ocean Park or San Diego's Sea World. This was right in the heart of Metro Manila—actually, a little to the south, in a special enclosure called Aquatorium, just a few blocks from the SM Mall of Asia.

Jello and Jumbo, a father-and-son team of sea lions, took the stage first. They playfully swept their right fins back and forth across the floor, leaving the fascinated bipeds wondering, "What are they doing?"

The show host would later explain it was their way of saying hello. Cute!

They then took turns performing tricks. Jumbo played basketball and danced on a rolling cylinder; Jello did some math and a dose of acrobatics. At the end of each trick, they "clapped" with their fins for the audience to follow suit. Could they actually be clowns in seal costumes?

The real stars of the show, of course, were Tutti and Frutti, two bottlenose dolphins who did much more than swim about and charm everyone off their seats (although that would have been enough, too, truth to tell).

We say, one unclad dolphin can upstage Britney Spears without underwear anytime. With two of them, throw in Paris Hilton, too. And these cackling water babes sure can shake their rears as well!

At the end of the show, two tots who danced for the other spectators got the reward of a lifetime—a ride around the pool on a toy raft pulled by Tutti and Frutti. Hmm. We know what to do next time.

After the show, everyone who wanted a snapshot with the stars were allowed into the poolside area. Now, *that* couldn't wait for the next time. We shamelessly ran past the kids to seize a moment that might never come again.

So there we were, absolutely giddy with Tutti and Frutti just an arm's length away.

We had abandoned decorum for a handshake and a photo op, true. Imagine how it felt when we got a "kiss" on top of that—a sudden wonderful wetness on the cheek. And then that mischievous cackling erupted yet again.

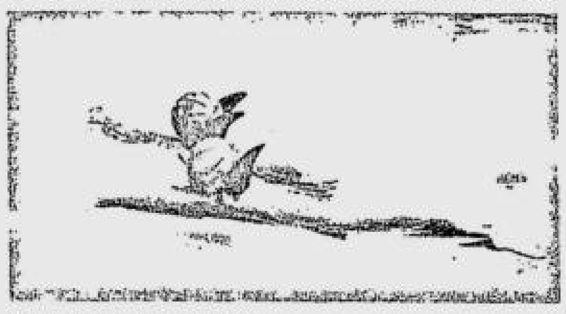
What a day it has been ... What a rare mood we're in ... Why, it's almost like being in love

Merry Christmas! Tutti-frutti!

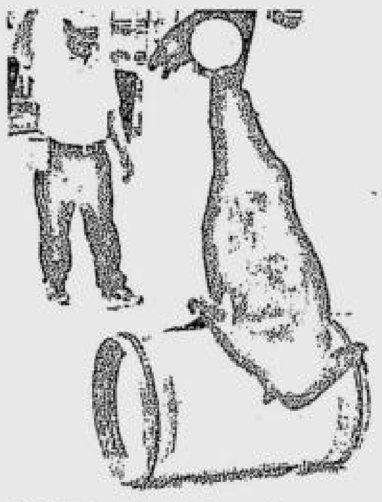
"The Wonderful World of Dolphins" goes on every day—11 a.m., 2 p.m., 4 p.m., 6 p.m. and 8 p.m.—at The SM Mall of Asia Aqua Park until Jan. 7, 2007.

HULA hoop dancing, with a little help from their trainers

A TREAT for any tot



TANDEM water hoops



JUMBO rolls on a barrel, on orders trainer Kasim

OH, OH, what a kiss. Trainer Hermanto approves.

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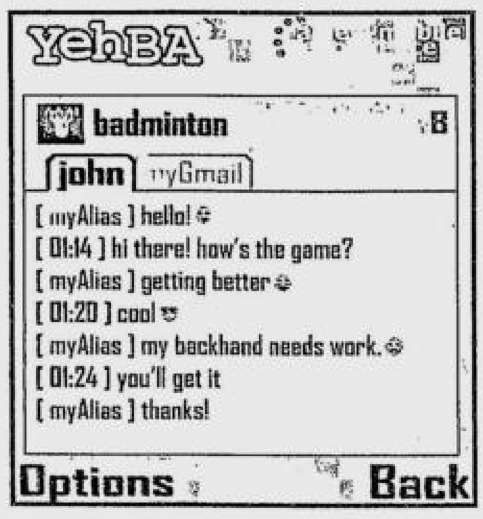
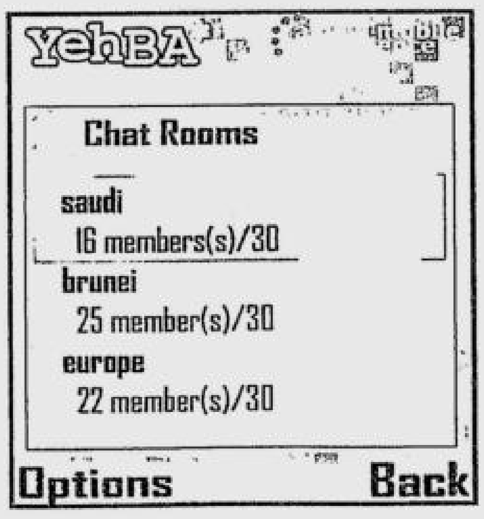


YehBA
badminton
john | myGmail
[myAlias] hello!
[01:14] hi there! how's the game?
[myAlias] getting better
[01:20] cool
[myAlias] my backhand needs work.
[01:24] you'll get it
[myAlias] thanks!



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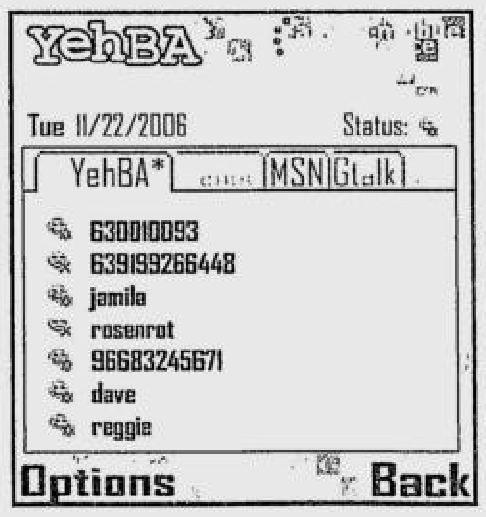
Chat Rooms
saudi
16 members(s)/30
brunei
25 member(s)/30
europe
22 member(s)/30



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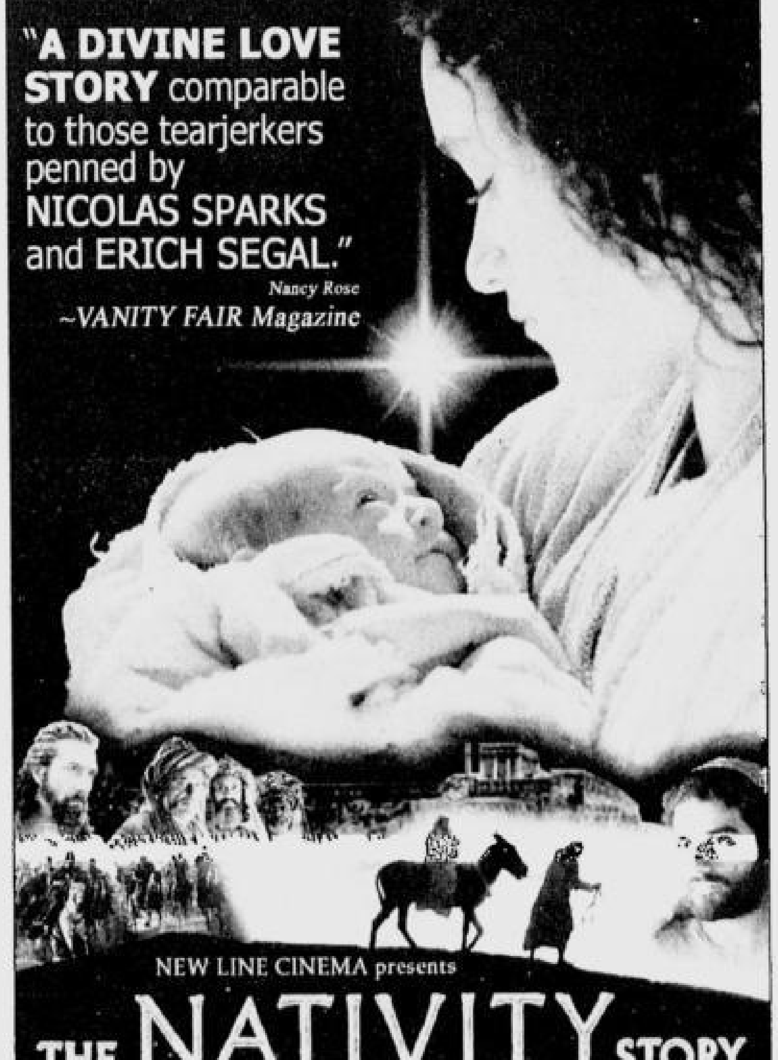
~His Eminence Cardinal Tarcisio Bertone, Vatican Secretary of State

"This is our answer to the BLASPHEMY [*The Da Vinci Code*] thrown at our faith..."
~His Eminence Gaudencio Cardinal Rosales

"Hooray for Holy-wood...the must-see movie this holiday season. And the unprecedented well-received Vatican premiere is the papal equivalent of TWO THUMBS UP."
Rebecca Winters Keegan
~TIME Magazine

"I'm not an emotional person, but when I finished watching it ... THE TEARS CAME DOWN MY CHEEK. I COULDN'T SPEAK."
Anne Graham Lotz
~NEWSWEEK Magazine

"A DIVINE LOVE STORY comparable to those tearjerkers penned by NICOLAS SPARKS and ERICH SEGAL."
Nancy Rose
~VANITY FAIR Magazine



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MEGAWORLD CORPORATION

Making a Giant Mark on Metro Manila's Landscape

Residential condominiums...

Megaworld Corporation is taking Philippine real estate to greater heights. As the country's largest residential condominium developer and business process outsourcing (BPO) landlord, it is a driving force—and one of the few trendsetters—in the property industry.

Since 1994, it has launched more than 200 residential buildings, office towers, commercial centers and a hotel, with a total floor area of more than two million square meters. With this unsurpassed record, the developer is carving out a solid reputation ahead of its competitors.

Distinguishing itself as an innovator, Megaworld has seized and capitalized on new market trends. And every year, it creates real estate—from homes to offices to retail centers—that goes beyond the beautiful and above the ordinary.

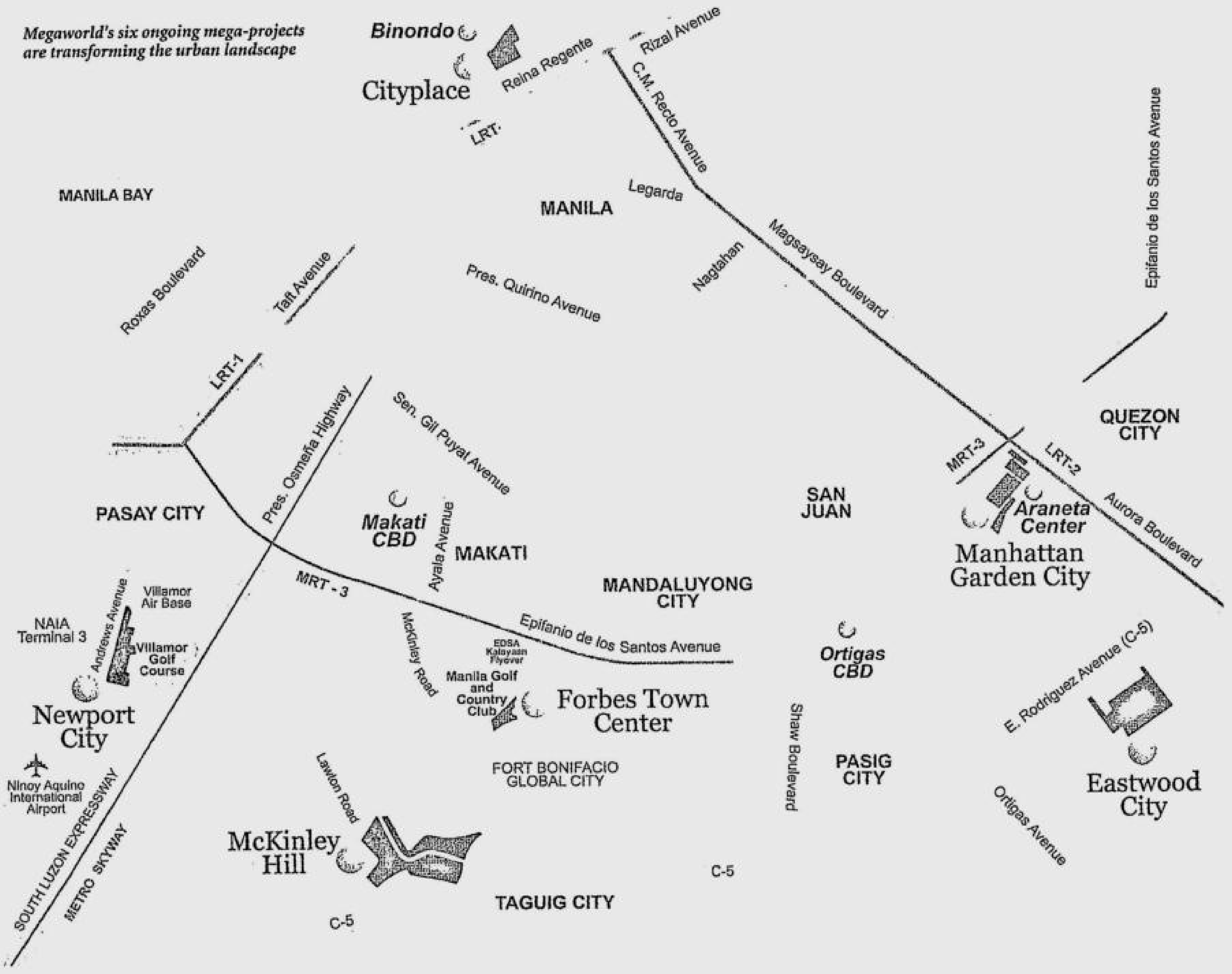
...and BPO offices are the market segments where Megaworld leads

Mega-sizing Communities in Metro Manila

In recent years, Megaworld has brought about a shift in demand from stand-alone projects to large-scale community developments with a strong residential condominium component. These projects, literally mega-communities, locate residences, workplaces and commercial centers in one setting. Here, people live better, richer lives—and enjoy more value from their homes—because everything is equally accessible.

The Eastwood City township in Quezon City is Megaworld's first salvo in building mega-communities. This 16-hectare enclave best exemplifies the developer's commitment to introduce exciting new urban lifestyles. Today, Eastwood City serves as Megaworld's inspiration for a series of massive projects set to reinvent the face of the metro.

Megaworld's six ongoing mega-projects are transforming the urban landscape


Binondo
Cityplace
Reina Regente
Rizal Avenue
LRT
C.M. Recto Avenue
MANILA BAY
MANILA
Legarda
Magsaysay Boulevard
Epifanio de los Santos Avenue
Nagtahan
Roxas Boulevard
Taft Avenue
Pres. Quirino Avenue
LRT-1
Sen. Gil Puyat Avenue
Pres. Osmeña Highway
QUEZON CITY
MRT-3
LRT-2
SAN JUAN
PASAY CITY
Makati CBD
Ayala Avenue
MAKATI
Araneta Center
Aurora Boulevard
Manhattan Garden City
MANDALUYONG CITY
MRT - 3
Villamor Air Base
NAIA Terminal 3
Andrews Avenue
Villamor Golf Course
McKinley Road
Epifanio de los Santos Avenue
EDSA Kalayaan Flyover
Manila Golf and Country Club
Forbes Town Center
Ortigas CBD
E. Rodriguez Avenue (C-5)
Newport City
Ninoy Aquino International Airport
FORT BONIFACIO GLOBAL CITY
Shaw Boulevard
PASIG CITY
Eastwood City
Lawton Road
Ortigas Avenue
McKinley Hill
C-5
SOUTH LUZON EXPRESSWAY
METRO SKYWAY
TAGUIG CITY
C-5

Eastwood City

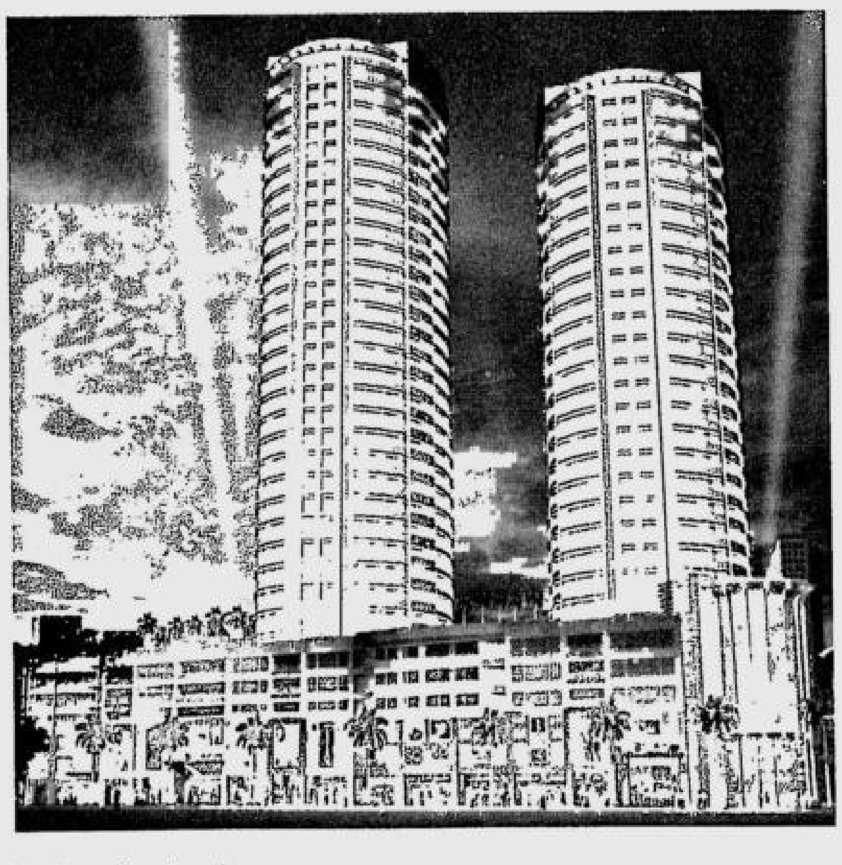
Bagumbayan, Quezon City

Megaworld has fashioned in Eastwood City a residential block that is the epitome of its uncompromising stance against real estate that is boring and predictable. It is a community of uniquely themed, good-looking homes made to accommodate—and satisfy—all manner of customer tastes and expectations.

Eastwood LeGrand at night

LeGrand's seventh-level play deck

Expanding the residential offerings at Eastwood City is **Eastwood LeGrand,** set at the heart of the new Palm District. The 38-story address boasts a contemporary design that incorporates Art Deco details. The project's studio pads to one-bedroom homes are matched by first-rate play amenities at the seventh level. And as part of the Eastwood City community, Eastwood LeGrand benefits from a choice location that is a few steps away from modern lifestyle conveniences.


The twin-tower first phase showing the ground-level shopping complex

Cityplace

Binondo, Manila

Cityplace emerges as the largest development of its kind in Manila's Chinatown in the last 25 years. Featuring residential condominium towers, a shopping center, a boutique hotel and a centerpiece promenade, the project not only pays tribute to Binondo as a melting pot of Malay, Spanish and Chinese influences but also preserves and enhances its rich heritage.

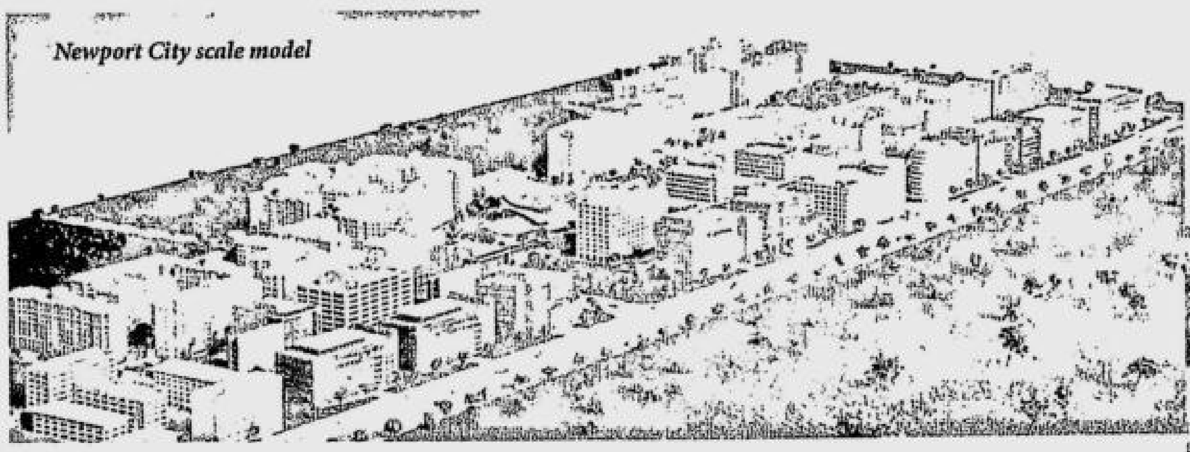
Two 35-story residential towers comprise the project's **Phase 1.** The first tower hosts three- to four-bedroom suites while the second tower features two-bedroom homes. The residences are complemented by a sprawling play area, close to 15,000 square meters, at the seventh level. Here, homeowners are a breath away from top-notch sporting and recreational options. With more than 300 ornamental trees and shrubs, residents also take pleasure in a nature-rich setting right within the community.

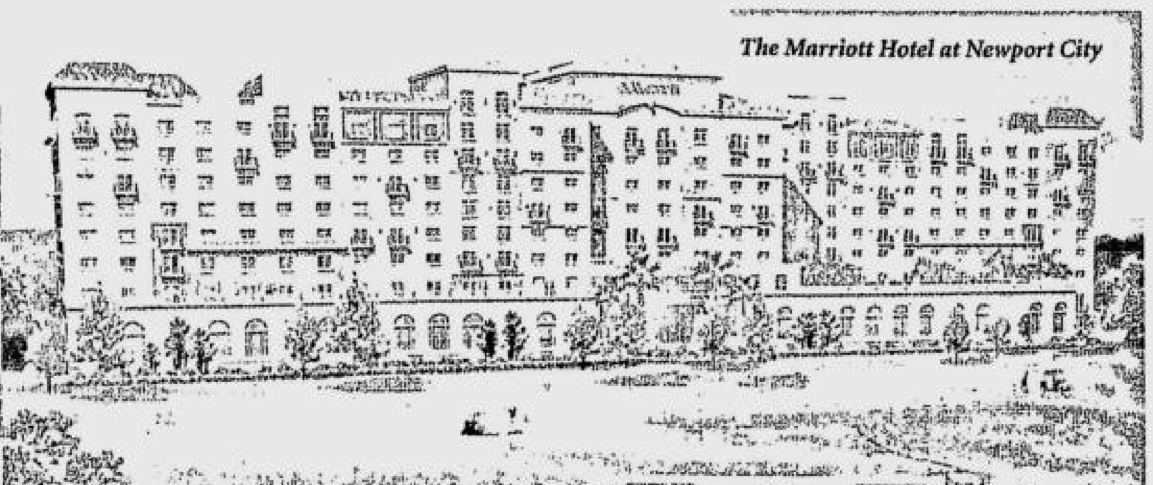
Lush centerpiece promenade

Offering well-designed, economically sized homes ideal for young professionals and families is **The Olympian,** the second phase of Cityplace. Residents can choose from one- to two-bedroom homes that come with an exclusive recreational area featuring a 20-meter lap pool with in-water lounge, gym, outdoor fitness station, function area, a children's playground and pool and landscaped gardens. At Cityplace, homeowners of both the first and second phases enjoy quick access to a three-level retail complex below the residential floors.

The Olympian with three towers

MEGAWORLD CORPORATION


Newport City scale model


The Marriott Hotel at Newport City

World-class spa facilities at the Marriott

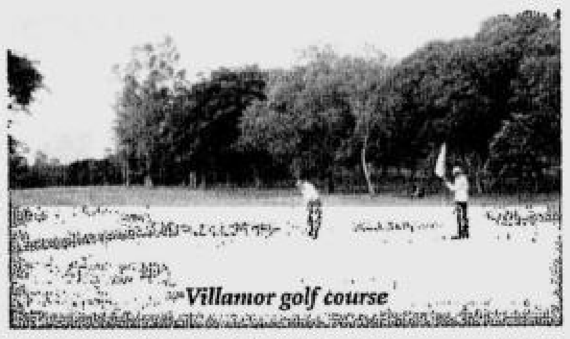
Newport City

Villamor Air Base, Pasay City

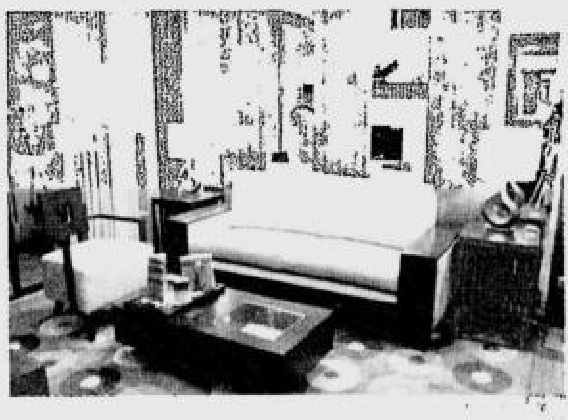
The 25-hectare Newport City, set next to the championship Villamor golf course, is envisioned as one of the most exciting hotel-and-golf resorts in the region. Featuring the same live-work-play formula that has made Eastwood City successful, it combines a low-density residential area with a hotel, themed shopping-dining-entertainment hub, an office park and institutional center with a sports club, church and other community facilities.

Newport City's residential section, **The Residential Resort,** boasts Metro Manila's first and only luxury homes. It is divided into three phases with a total of 16 buildings: Montecito, Sarasota and Pinehurst. Residents can unwind in plush condominium homes, clustered around deluxe amenities, in a lush environment mostly dedicated to greenery and wide, open spaces.

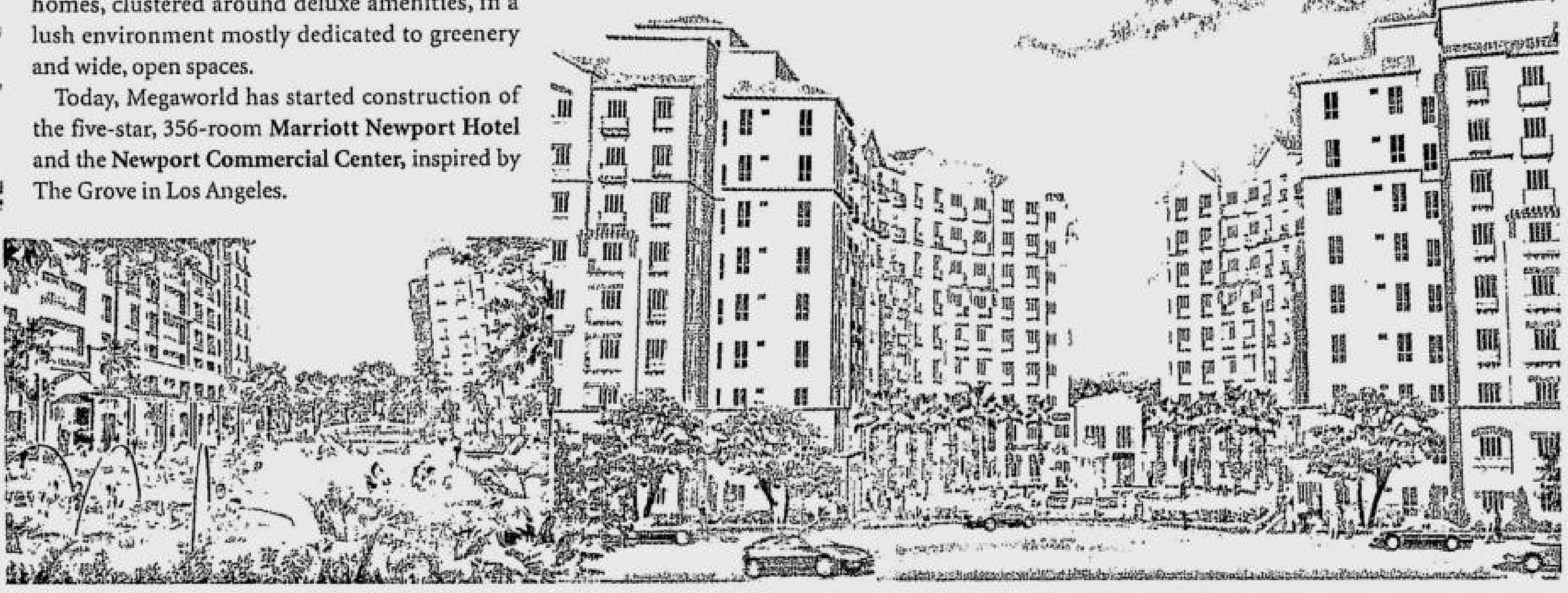
Today, Megaworld has started construction of the five-star, 356-room **Marriott Newport Hotel** and the **Newport Commercial Center,** inspired by The Grove in Los Angeles.


Villamor golf course

The Newport City Information Center

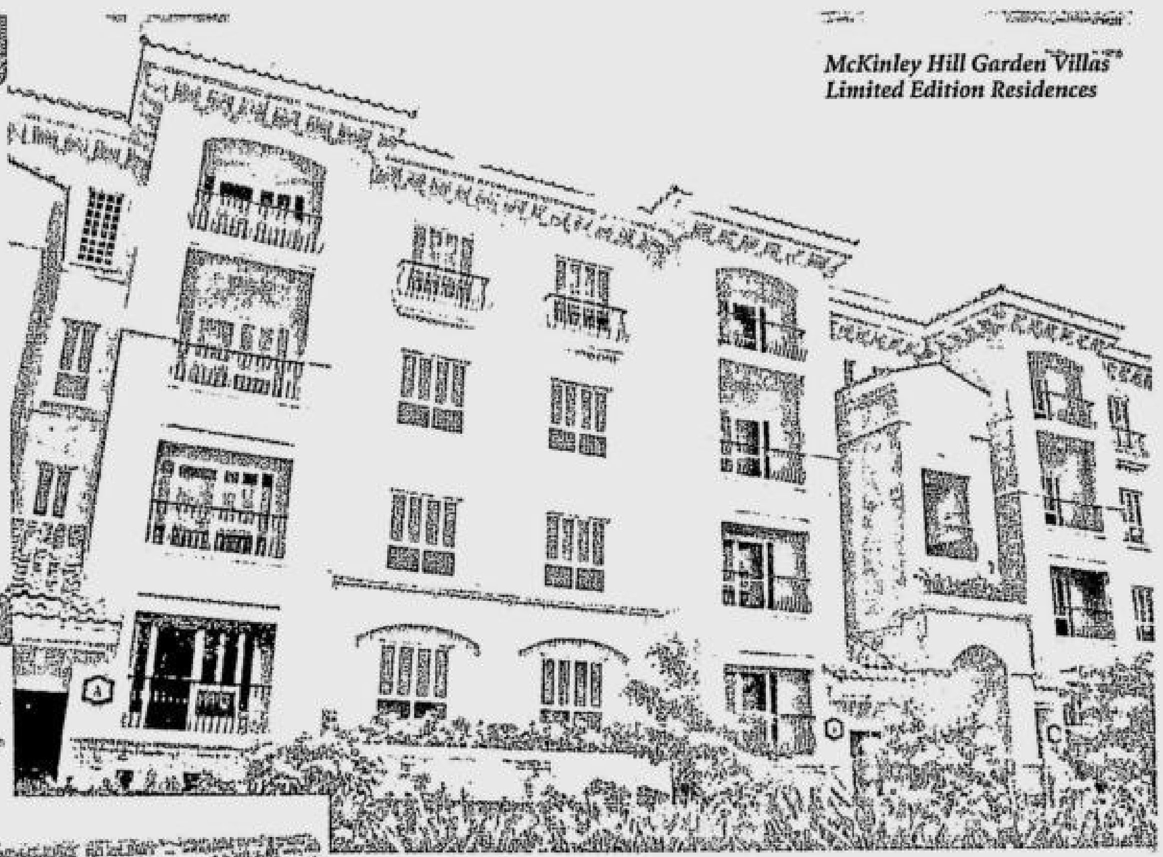

Lavish interiors of The Residential Resort's model home

Residential clusters encircling a central plaza



First-rate play amenities

Model homes at McKinley Hill Village, the first residential phase


McKinley Hill Garden Villas Limited Edition Residences

McKinley Hill

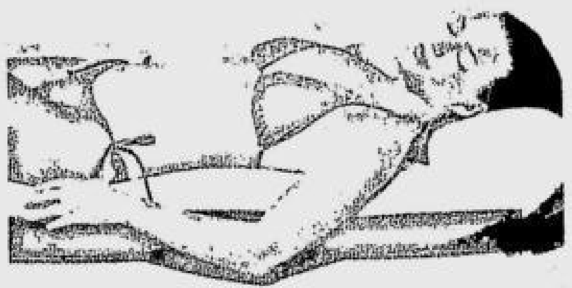
Fort Bonifacio, Taguig City

Megaworld's vision of a world-class enclave is taking shape at the 50-hectare McKinley Hill township. Bringing together residential, office, institutional and retail blocks, it offers a complete, well-balanced lifestyle for those who choose to make it their home.

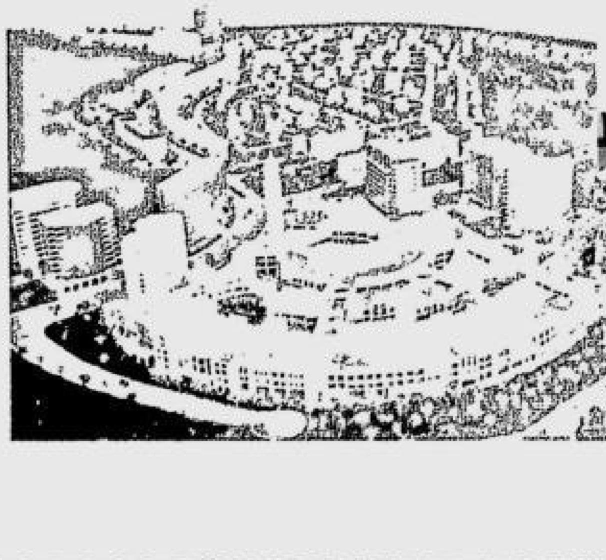
Megaworld has forged ties with two prestigious entities to anchor the project's **institutional block.** Enderun Colleges offers top-notch training in the global hospitality industry. Through Enderun and other upcoming school partners such as the Korean and Chinese International Schools, Megaworld is adding a "learn" element to McKinley Hill. Also heading the institutional scene in the area is the British Embassy.

Among the project's new residential attractions are the **McKinley Hill Garden Villas Limited Edition Residences** and **Stamford Executive Residences.** The Spanish-Mediterranean-inspired Garden Villas feature 40 limited edition suites in two five-story buildings. Meanwhile, Stamford showcases studio units, play amenities at the roof deck level and a retail area at the ground floor.

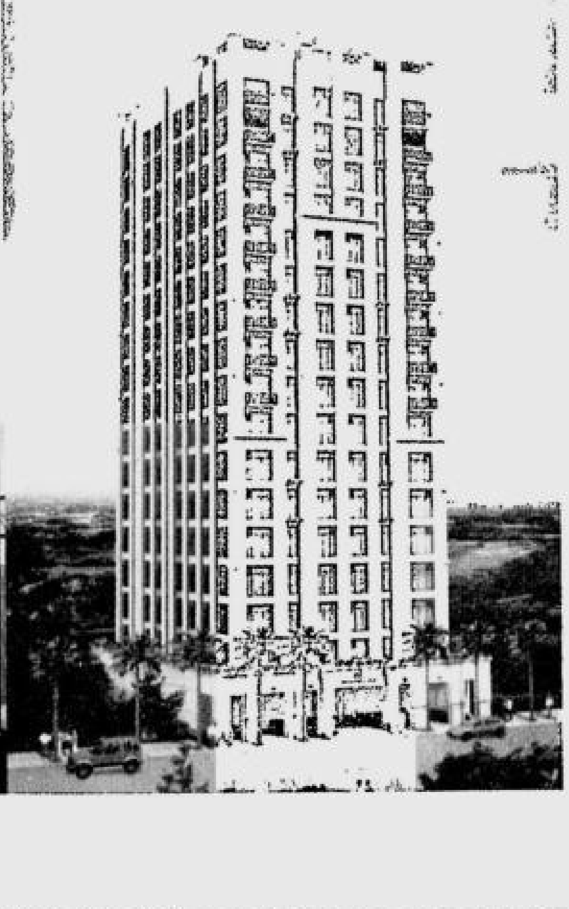
Mediterranean-style amenities at McKinley Hill Village's clubhouse complex



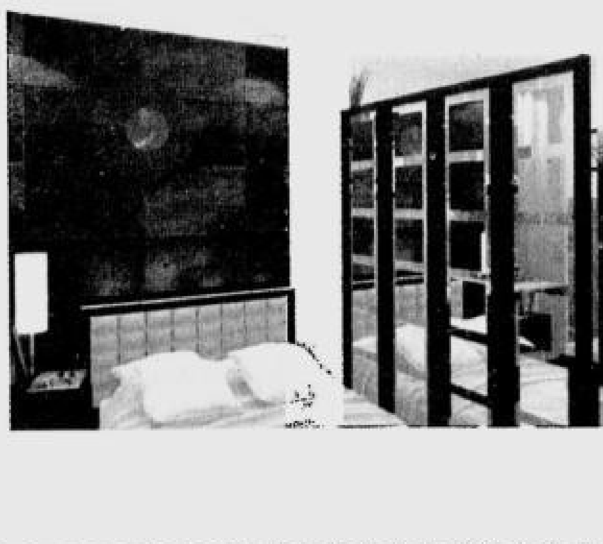
Megaworld ties up with Enderun Colleges...


...to anchor McKinley Hill's institutional block

Stamford Executive Residences



Cozy interiors of a Stamford home



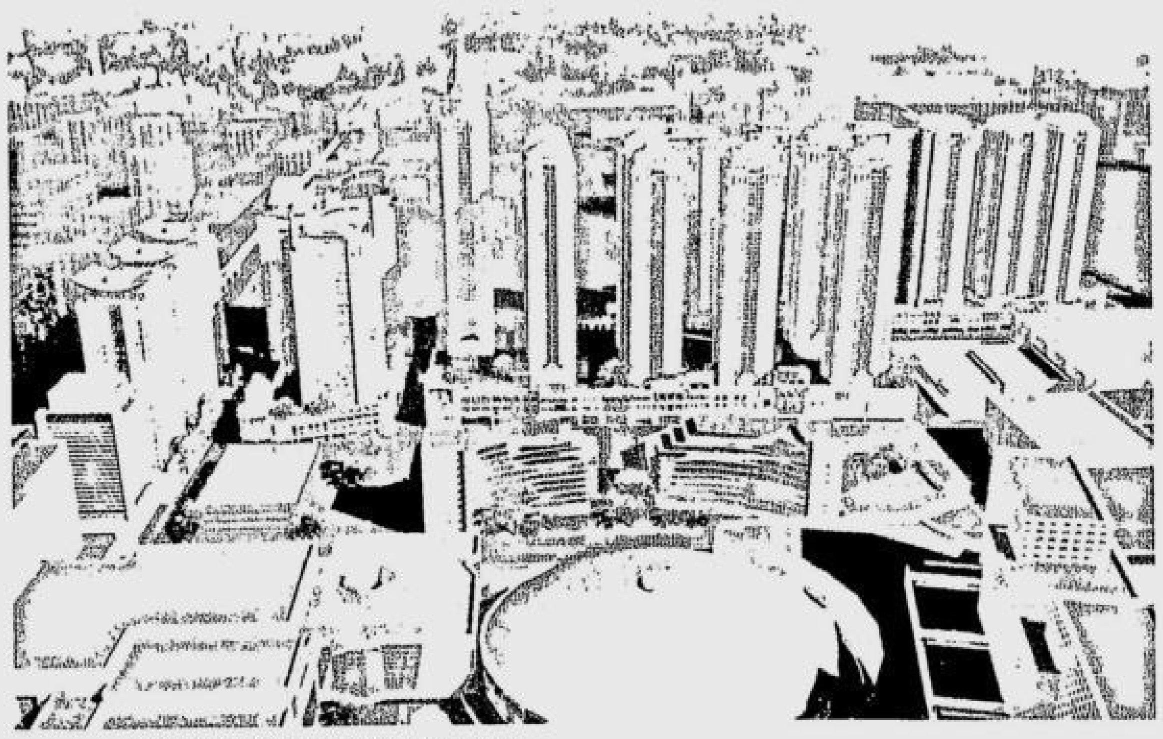
Manhattan Garden City

Araneta Center, Cubao, Quezon City

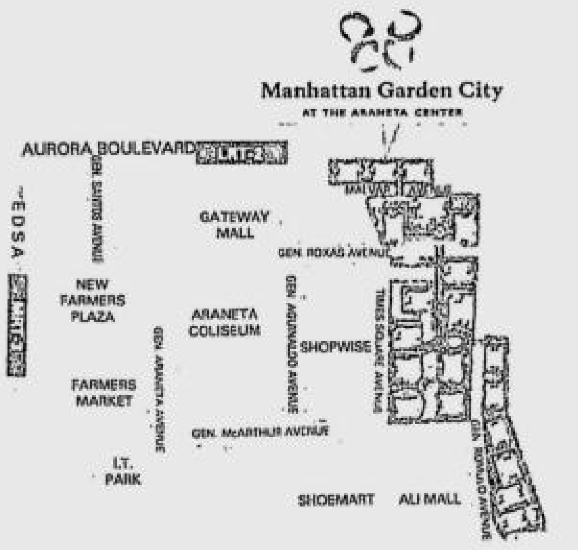
The five-hectare, 20-tower Manhattan Garden City is Megaworld's breakthrough project at the heart of the Araneta Center. Dubbed as the country's first-ever transit-oriented development, it offers matchless accessibility to the metro's key destinations with its direct link to the mass transportation systems of the LRT-2 and MRT-3. With both stations also connecting to the LRT-1, the project brings people a truly mobile lifestyle in a highly strategic location.

Manhattan Parkway, the three-tower first phase, is home to executive studios and one-bedroom units. These residences, combined with an impressive array of recreational amenities that relax and rejuvenate, showcase a privileged lifestyle. Close by are the Araneta Center's shopping, dining and entertainment hubs, all a few strides away.

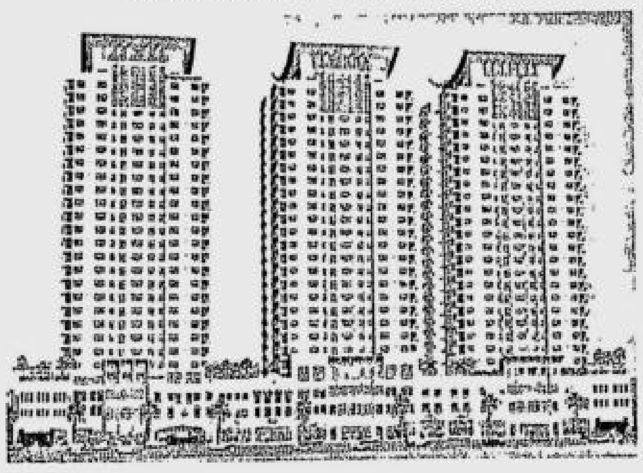
The three Parkway towers are linked to the buildings of the other phases by a four-story-high, 729-meter-long garden walkway, also a first in the Philippines.



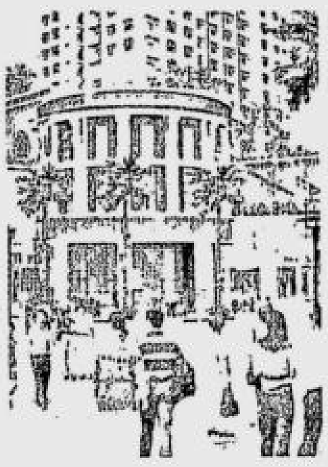
The 20-tower Manhattan Garden City


Manhattan Garden City
AT THE ARANETA CENTER
AURORA BOULEVARD
LRT
EDSA
GEN. SANTOS AVENUE
GATEWAY MALL
GEN. ROXAS AVENUE
NEW FARMERS PLAZA
ARANETA COLISEUM
GEN. ARANETA AVENUE
GEN. AGUINALDO AVENUE
SHOPWISE
TIMES SQUARE AVENUE
FARMERS MARKET
GEN. McARTHUR AVENUE
I.T. PARK
SHOEMART
ALI MALL
GEN. ROMULO AVENUE

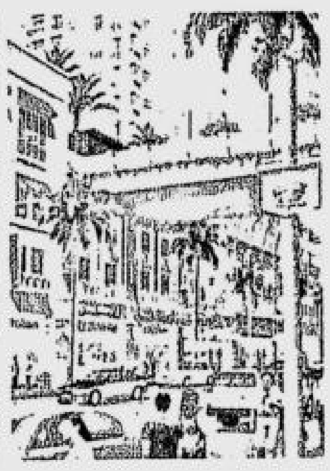
The fourth-level garden deck



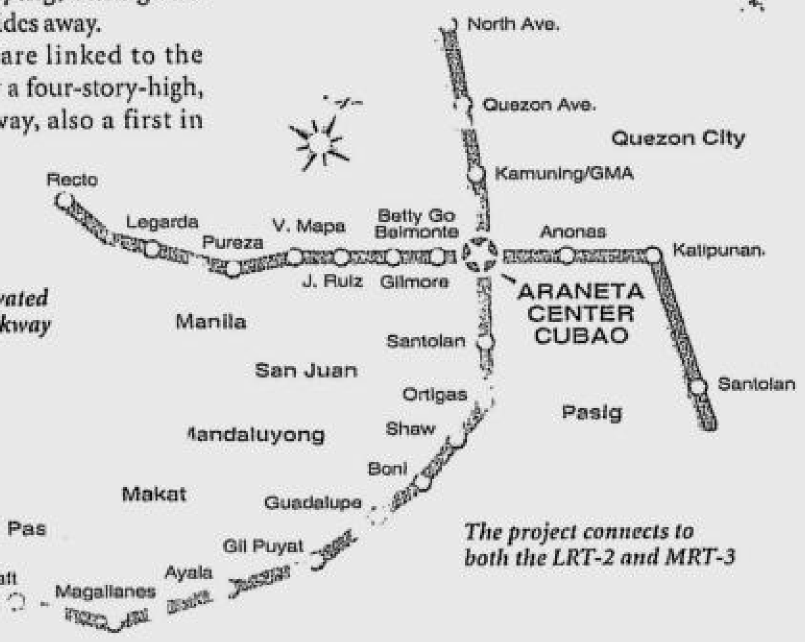
The three towers of the first phase, Manhattan Parkway



A transfer pavilion links the walkway to various retail outlets and parking facilities



Elevated walkway


North Ave.
Quezon Ave.
Quezon City
Kamuning/GMA
Recto
Legarda
Pureza
V. Mapa
Betty Go Belmonte
J. Ruiz
Gilmore
Anonas
Katipunan
ARANETA CENTER CUBAO
Manila
Santolan
San Juan
Ortigas
Santolan
Pasig
Mandaluyong
Shaw
Boni
Makat
Guadalupe
Pas
Gil Puyat
Taft
Magallanes
Ayala

The project connects to both the LRT-2 and MRT-3

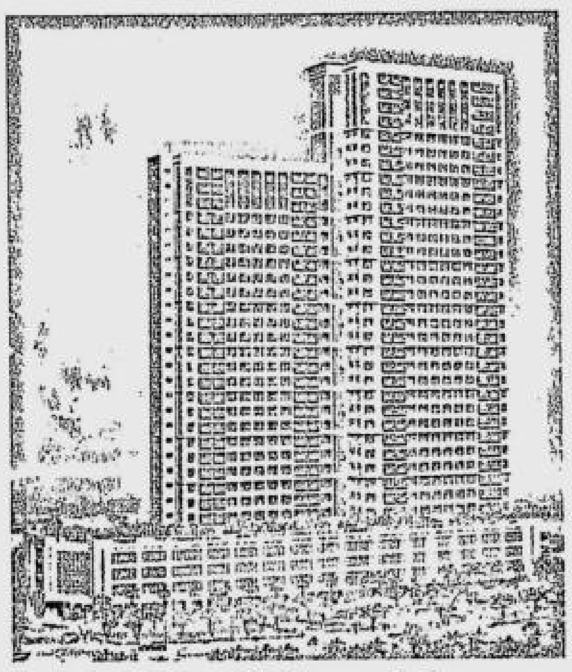
Forbes Town Center

Bonifacio Global City, Taguig City

The Global City, hailed as the country's newest business district, is home to Megaworld's five-hectare Forbes Town Center. Bordering the Manila Golf and Country Club, it is the only project in the area that offers the longest stretch—almost half a kilometer—of spectacular golf course views.

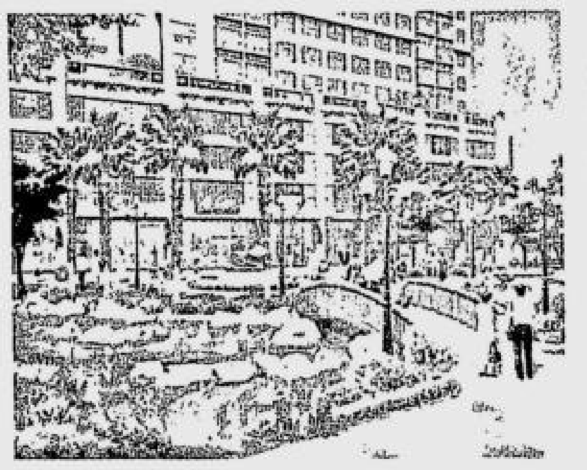
Two residential sections make up Forbes Town Center. The first comprises the three **Bellagio** towers that provide front-row views of the Manila Golf course. The second hosts the seven buildings of the Forbeswood residences, all embraced by lush greenery. The six towers of **Forbeswood Heights** overlook a 5,500-square-meter central park that overflows with play amenities, while the new **Forbeswood Parklane** is just across from the Forbes Town Park and Lagoon.

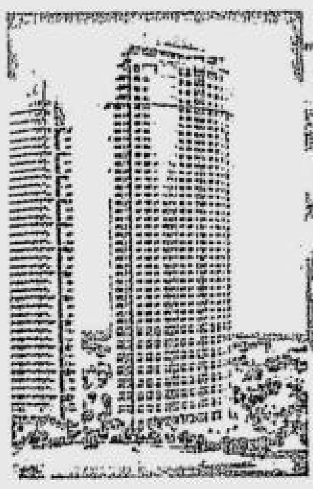
Another attraction at Forbes Town Center is a high-end retail strip called **Forbes Town Road.** Inspired by Singapore's Bugis Junction, it is expected to host more than a hundred casual and fine-dining restaurants and haute couture shops.



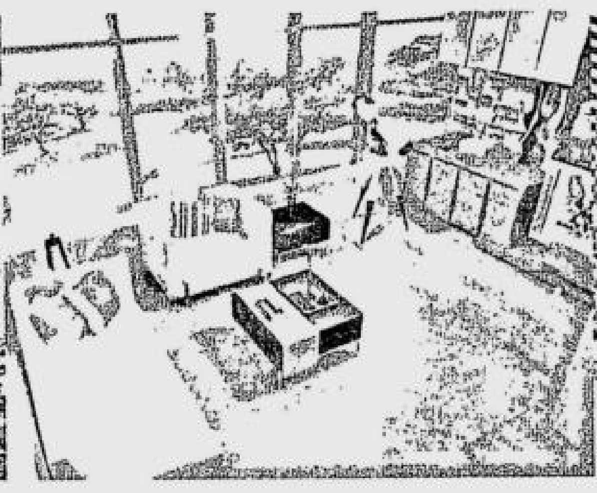
Forbeswood Parklane overlooks the Forbes Town Park and Lagoon

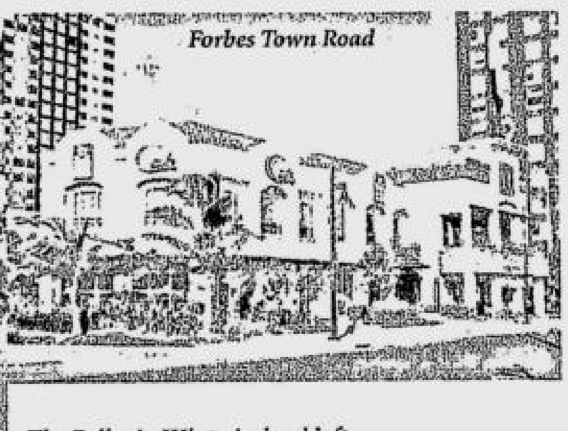
The now-sold-out Forbeswood Heights





Bellagio III

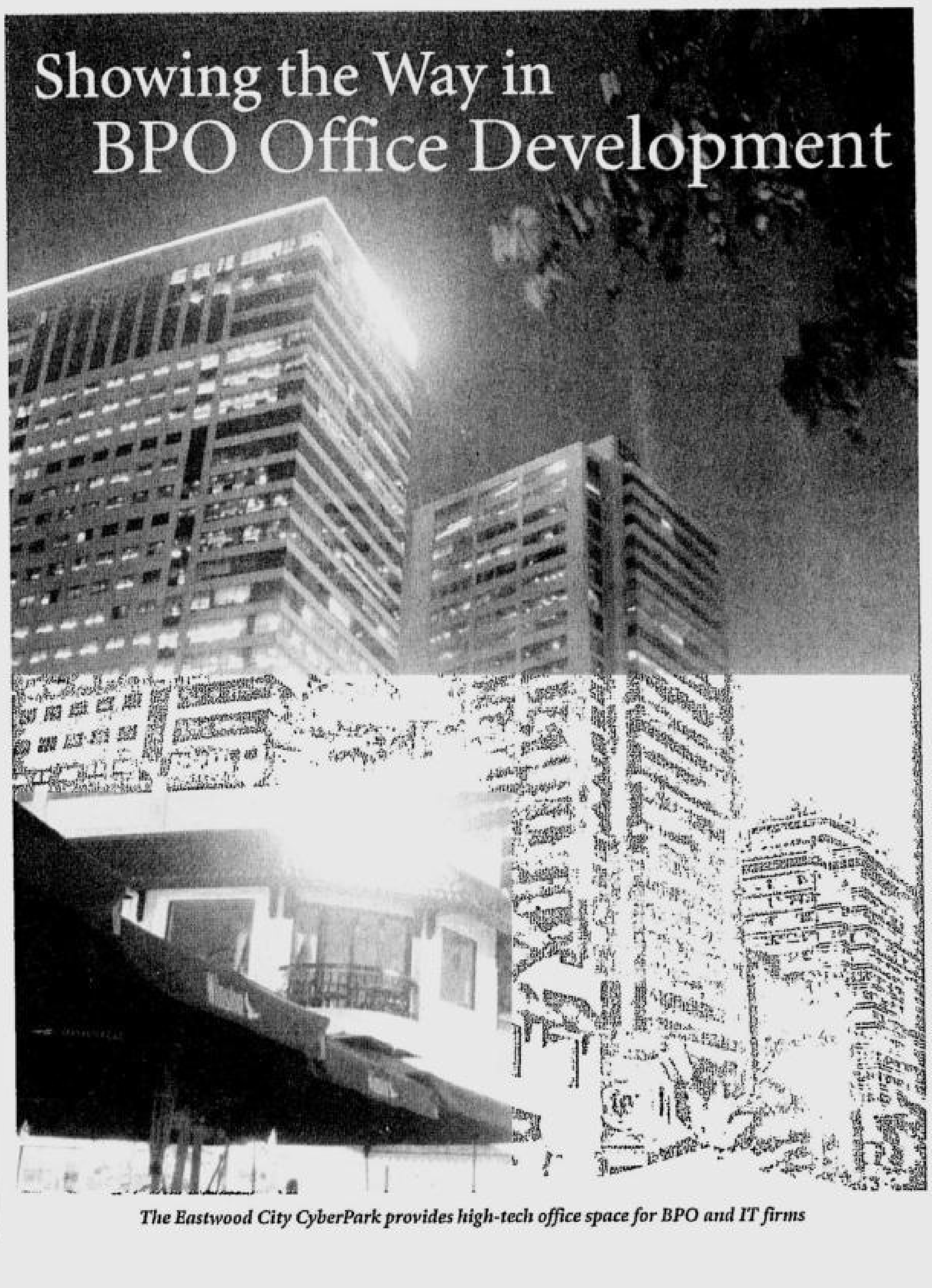




Forbes Town Road

The Bellagio III's twin-level loft

Showing the Way in BPO Office Development



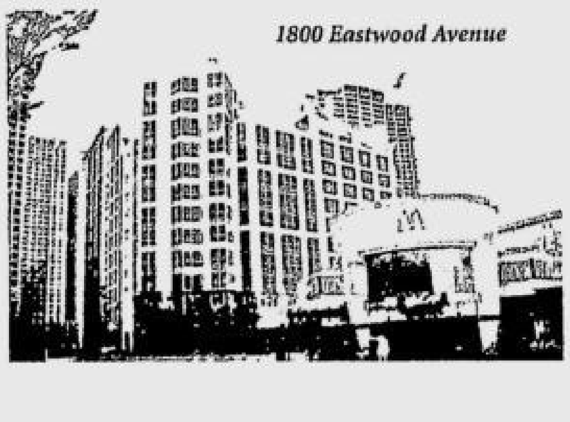
The Eastwood City CyberPark provides high-tech office space for BPO and IT firms

The rapidly expanding business process outsourcing (BPO) sector is playing a major role in creating a robust economic and investment environment in the Philippines. Megaworld is taking advantage of this growth by aggressively addressing the country's dwindling supply of top-grade, BPO-ready office space.

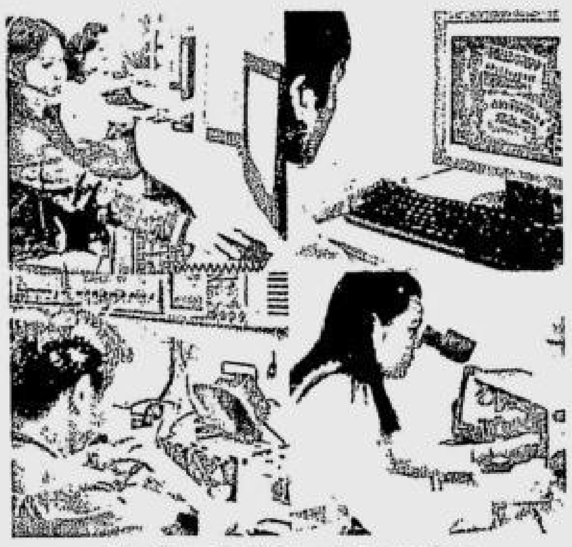
Today, Megaworld is the country's No.1 BPO office landlord. Since 1996, it has built more than 350,000 square meters of office space. It is set to build at least 500,000 square meters more, designed primarily for a BPO clientele, in Metro Manila's most strategic locations in the next five years.

Eastwood City CyberPark

Megaworld's Eastwood City CyberPark is the first information technology (IT) park in the country as well as the first successful IT park in all of Southeast Asia. The CyberPark is home to six high-tech, fully operational buildings: **IBM Plaza, Citibank Square, Cyber One, TechnoPlaza One, Epixtar House** and the **International Centre for Information Technology Education (ICITE).** Set to open for business by December this year is the 12-story **1800 Eastwood Avenue,** which has leased out 95 percent of its 35,000 square meters of office space. These seven buildings combined host close to 200,000 square meters of BPO office space—the biggest by any developer. In the offing is another office building, **1880 Eastwood Avenue,** which will add 35,000 square meters more to the CyberPark's inventory of BPO-ready office space.



1800 Eastwood Avenue



The CyberPark's knowledge workers

The CyberPark is home to over 60 firms—half of which belong to the BPO sector—and a 15,000-strong BPO and IT workforce, making it the workplace of choice among companies specializing in BPO and IT businesses. Among its high-profile tenants are:

- Global information technology giant IBM
- Citibank's Asia Pacific Systems and Technology Solutions Development Center
- Largest Asia-based call center eTelecare
- Anti-virus software developer Trend Micro
- Animation company TOEI Animation Phils.
- Custom power supplies provider EMERSON and its subsidiary Astec Power
- Canon's research and development arm Canon Information Technology Philippines
- Linksys technical support center Link2Support
- Electrical engineering and electronics company Siemens
- SITEL Corporation, one of the world's top five call centers in terms of revenue

Equipped with Wi-Fi infrastructure, Eastwood City stands out as a "hot spot city." It offers Eastwood City tenants and visitors free round-the-clock access to wireless broadband Internet.

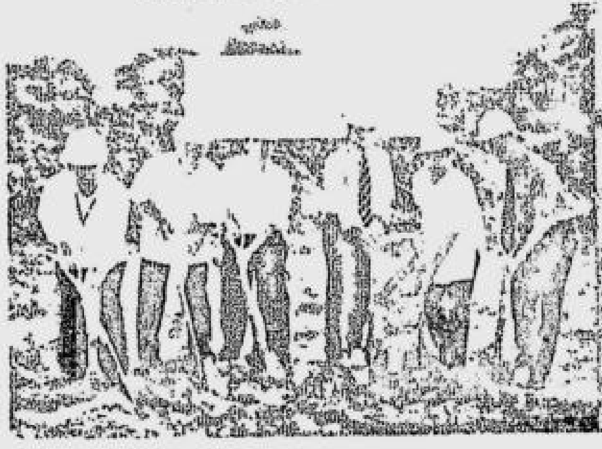
MEGAWORLD CORPORATION

Newport City CyberPark

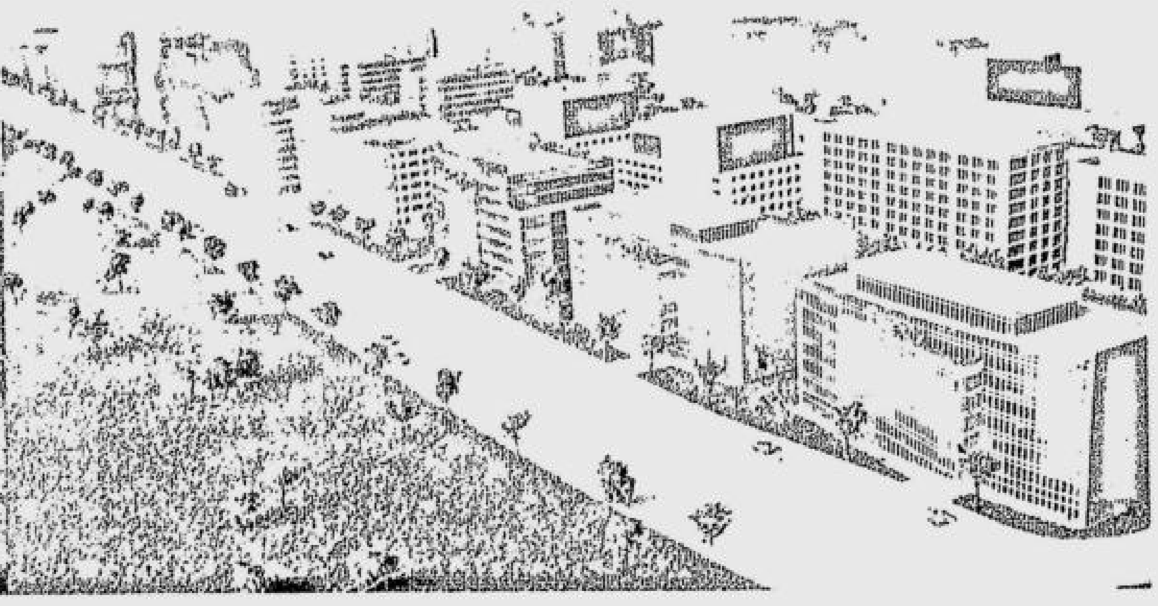
With its reputation as an upcoming hotel-and-golf resort and its proximity to the local and international airports, Newport City's business section boasts both a relaxing atmosphere and an environment conducive for business.

Megaworld has broken ground for **Newport Corporate Plaza One,** the first office building at Newport City. The eight-story, 20,000-square-meter project is equipped with high-tech infrastructure to meet the requirements of today's most formidable BPO companies. The project is slated for completion by the first quarter of 2008.

Groundbreaking rites for Newport Corporate Plaza One



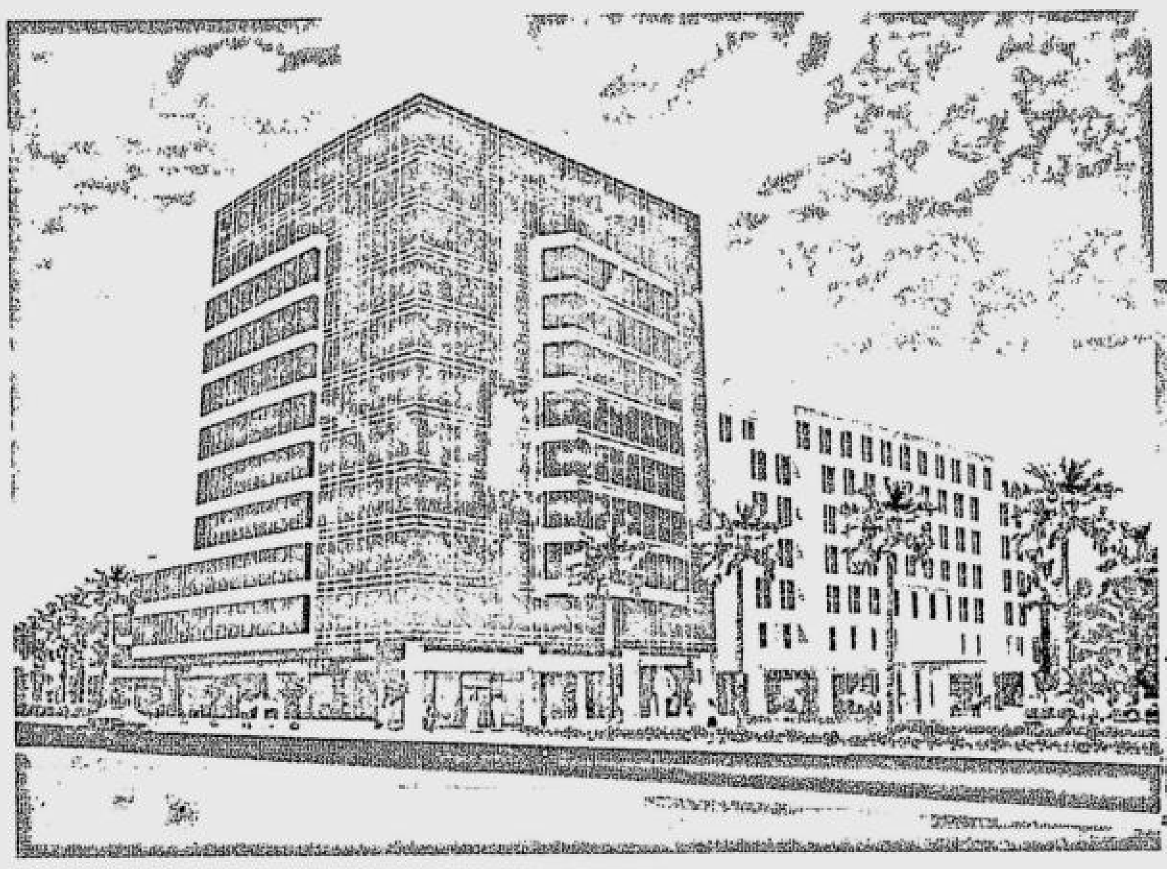
The proposed office block at Newport City



McKinley Hill CyberPark

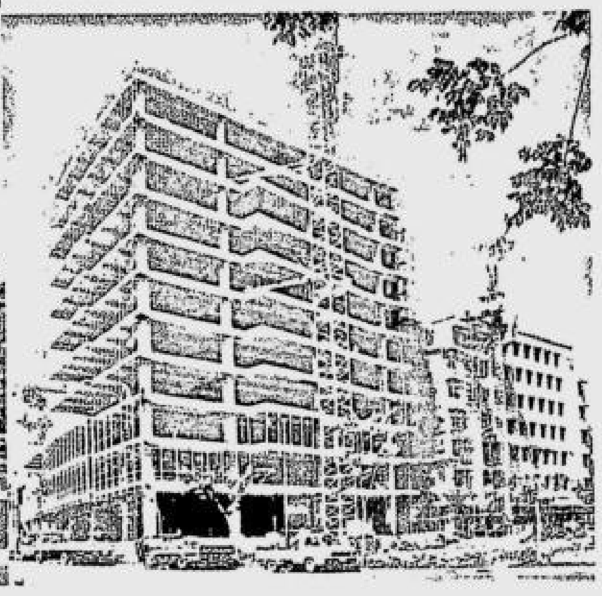
McKinley Hill's 15-hectare corporate block, the McKinley Hill CyberPark, will host initially at least over 200,000 square meters of office space over the next five years. As an economic zone approved by the Philippine Economic Zone Authority, it offers a package of strategic incentives to local and foreign companies specializing in IT and BPO services.

Already in progress is the construction of **One World Square,** the first office tower to rise in the community. The 11-story, 40,000-square-meter building has recently been topped off and is slated for completion by the first half of 2007. Construction of two more office towers, **Two World Square** and **Three World Square**—with a floorplate of about 25,000 square meters each—is in the offing.



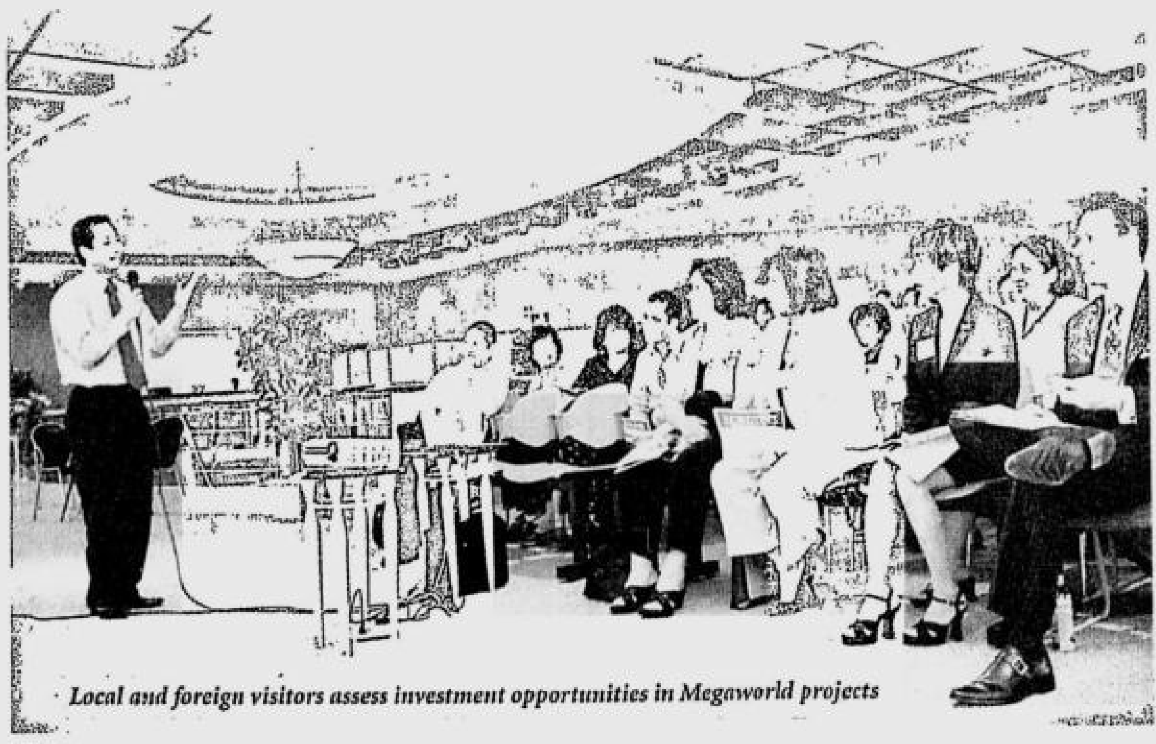
Architect's rendering of a new high-tech office building, One World Square...

...and the actual construction site



A Strong Share in the Overseas Filipino Market

Overseas Filipinos and their families are driving a demand for mid-income housing



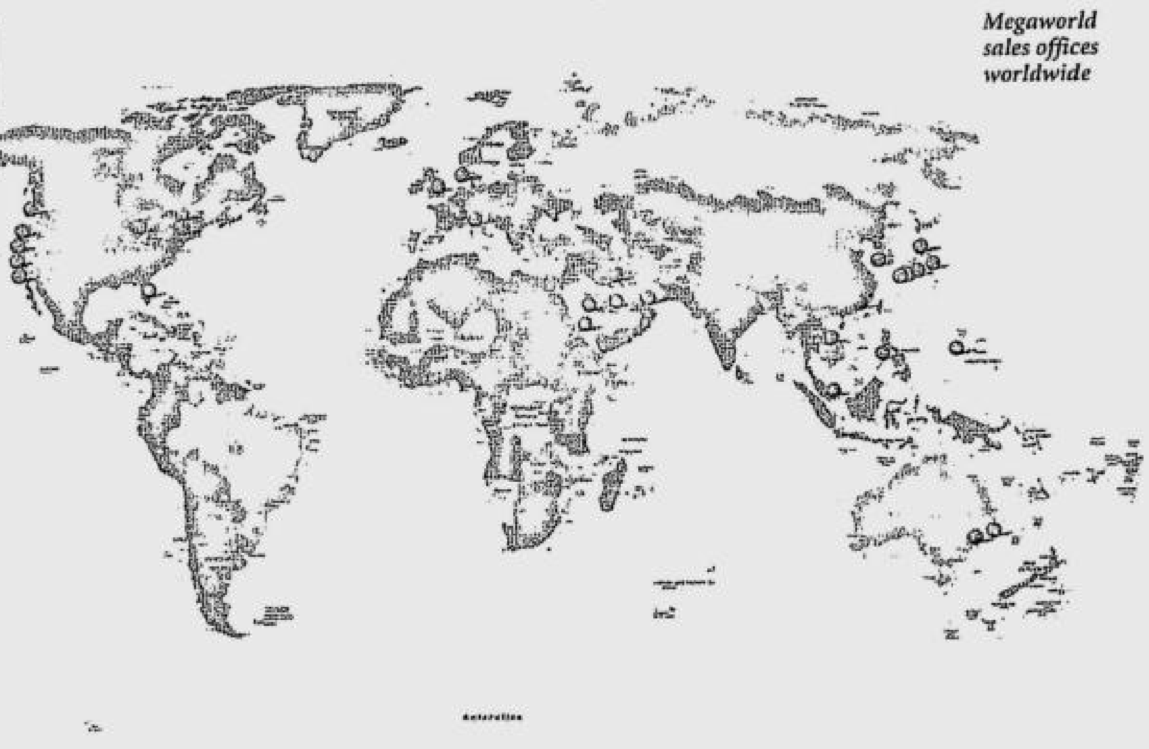
Local and foreign visitors assess investment opportunities in Megaworld projects

The surge of remittances from overseas Filipinos is helping fuel the growth of the property sector in the Philippines. Dollar inflows are projected to hit an all-time high of US$12 billion by end-2006. Of this figure, about US$3 billion will be invested in real estate. And since investing in mid-income housing has now become a priority among overseas Filipinos, Megaworld, as a leader in this segment, is well positioned to provide them with quality products and services.

Through Megaworld International, Megaworld's overseas marketing arm, the developer is building a strong brand in the international community. Its global reach is currently unmatched, with more than 30 sales offices spanning the Asia Pacific, Europe, the Middle East and the USA, manned by almost 600 overseas-based independent agents. With more offices to open in Canada, Europe and the USA, Megaworld International expects the number to double in the next five years.

Setting Megaworld International apart is its dedication to provide excellent service to its customers. Through its highly diversified portfolio of real estate products, affordable payment and pricing schemes and after-sales services, Megaworld International brings the benefits of investing in the Megaworld brand as well as its trendsetting urban lifestyles to overseas Filipinos and other overseas real estate clients.

Overseas real estate clients at a Megaworld International exhibit



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